Library of the Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.

Division BS511
Section .L15
Shelf
Number

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

PROFESSOR LADD'S WORKS.

PSYCHOLOGY; Descriptive and Explanatory. A Treatise of the Phenomena, Laws, and Development of Human Mental Life. 8vo, $4.50.

INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY. An Inquiry after a Rational System of Scientific Principles in their Relation to Ultimate Reality. 8vo, $3.00.

OUTLINES OF PHYSIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY. A Textbook on Mental Science for Academies and Colleges. Illustrated. 8vo, $2.00.

ELEMENTS OF PHYSIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY. A Treatise of the Activities and Nature of the Mind, from the Physical and Experimental Point of View. With numerous illustrations. 8vo, $4.50.

THE DOCTRINE OF SACRED SCRIPTURE. A Critical, Historical, and Dogmatic Inquiry into the Origin and Nature of the Old and New Testaments. 2 vols., 8vo, $7.00.

THE PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH POLITY. Crown 8vo, $2.50.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE? An Inquiry of the Origin and Nature of the Old and New Testaments in the light of Modern Biblical Study. 12mo, $2.00.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

AN INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN BIBLICAL STUDY

BY

GEORGE T. LADD D.D.

Professor of Philosophy in Yale University.

FIFTH EDITION

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1894

COPYRIGHT, 1888. BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

PRESS OF
EDWARD O. JENKINS' SONS
NEW YORK.

Dedicated

TO THAT GREAT MULTITUDE
OF READERS OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE,
WHO REVERENTLY FOLLOW IT
AS THEIR GUIDE IN
CHRISTIAN FAITH AND
CHRISTIAN LIFE.

PREFACE.

THE character and purpose of this book can be most clearly indicated to the reader by stating the relations in which it stands to another book by the same author. In the Fall of 1883 I embodied the results of several years of study in a work on "The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture." It was the design of that work to state in full the answer which modern biblical study makes to inquiry—critical, historical, and dogmatic—into the origin and nature of the Old and New Testaments. The form of statement, however, was such as to adapt it to the wants of patient, special students of the Bible; the entire ground was gone over in detail, the evidence presented, and the authorities cited at every step in the discussion.

It has always been my intention at some time to put the conclusions of this large treatise into a form better adapted to the wants of the multitude of readers of the English Bible. I am well aware that but few of these readers have the time or previous training necessary for studying a critical work in two large volumes, even though it be upon a subject of so great moment and absorbing interest as the Holy Scriptures. Yet surely this multitude of readers ought to know, and without doubt finally will know, what is the verdict of scholarship concerning those more important points up-

on which modern biblical study has directed its inquiries. Not only a strictly scholarly but also a popular exposition of these points is sought for and demanded. In response to this search and demand I have now employed some months of comparative leisure from more severe studies in writing the following chapters. They contain a statement of the answer which critical investigation gives to the question, What is the Bible?—made with (as I hope) due regard to that brevity, clearness, and freedom from discussion of the more doubtful matters, which the average reader rightly expects and requires. To secure these qualities it has been necessary, of course, to omit almost altogether the presentation of the details of evidence on which the separate conclusions are based. But a few references have been placed at the foot of the page which indicate where, in the larger treatise, these details are fully presented.

Readers of the earlier book will not need to be told that its conclusions are here substantially unchanged. This certainly is not because the mind of the author has been unwilling to receive and welcome new light, to modify and even to reverse his opinions, although they were originally formed after long-continued and careful research. It is rather because all the evidence, which is so rapidly accumulating, tends to confirm those opinions. The discussions of the last five years have shown with increasing clearness in what direction modern biblical study is moving. The objections to the conclusions have, almost without exception, been based on other grounds than those of that evidence with which biblical study properly deals.

The character of this book may then be indicated by saying that it is a brief, popular answer to the question, What is the Bible?—a question which the author answered in a more full and elaborate form in his previous work.

The purpose of the book is apologetic. It is written in the interest of faith. Its author heartily accepts all the principles and tenets of biblical religion, including that Reformation view of the Bible itself, which makes the Christian find in it his only authentic and sufficient source of what is true for him to believe, and right for him to do, in matters appertaining to salvation. Indeed, the chief purpose of the book is practical, and has reference to vindicating this Christian use of the Bible. In other words, I should be glad to show clearly and convincingly that modern critical study of the Bible has discovered nothing which need disturb, much less can undermine and destroy, the intelligent employment of Holy Scripture as the believer's rule of faith and life. But such a desirable result, if gained at all, surely cannot be gained except at the expense of examining what this critical study has to disclose. It is not the suppression or the perversion of critical conclusions which will aid in defending either the Christian faith or the Christian sacred writings. No other way is open to the devout and honest student but to accept the assured results of modern biblical science; and then—when he finds this to be true—to maintain all the more confidently the compatibility of these results with the right practical use of the Bible. And surely the need of such a discussion is shown by

the helpless attitude in which blind adherence to traditional views places the student before the more sceptical theories. Is not the only alternative, then, either to leave the Bible undefended against sceptical attack, or else to make room in our doctrine for the facts to which these theories appeal?

The reader of this book will find that our verdict cannot be altogether so favorable as to the possibility of reconciling the results of the modern scholar's study of the biblical writings with certain opinions current *about* the origin and nature of the Bible. But if he reads with candor and care he will see that neither fidelity to the teachings of the Bible itself, nor adherence to the substance and spirit of the doctrine of the Church, requires him to hold these opinions; and reading in this way he can scarcely fail to see that the facts, as biblical science presents them, do not permit him to hold them. But this need occasion no alarm for the foundations of faith or for the fate of the Bible.

Over and over again in the history of Christ's Church has it been falsely and foolishly declared that faith would totter and fall if certain scientific or critical conclusions, imagined to be antagonistic to the Bible, should be established. So it was when the movement of the earth around the sun was discovered; when geology proposed its account of the long and slow development of the earth; when the existence among other nations than the Hebrews of early traditions like those of Genesis was made known. But the right distinction between the truth of the Bible and the truth of certain theories about the Bible will, in all such cases, finally

establish itself. Indeed, no other proof of the inspiration of Holy Scripture is on the whole more impressive than just this wonderful power of adapting its important claims to all the developments of human knowledge.

The reader is invited, then, to the same confidence in the essential truthfulness and stability of the Bible in which the author has tried to write his discussion of its origin and nature. What, indeed, is the Bible? It may not be precisely what many of its sincere but mistaken defenders have assumed it to be; it may not be precisely what the current theology is accustomed to suppose. But it is more and better than any of those theories, which modern biblical study has discredited, have been wont to hold. There is nothing in such study, when most thoroughly and scientifically conducted, to injure our confidence that in the Bible the believer has a divinely given and trustworthy authority for the true Christian faith, and the right form of Christian life. In the name and behalf of the faith which the Bible teaches, and of the conduct which it commends, we enter upon our investigation.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION..... 1–16

CHAPTER I.

JEWISH AND EARLY CHRISTIAN VIEWS..... 17–46

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE REFORMATION UNTIL NOW..... 47–75

CHAPTER III.

THE VIEWS OF THE BIBLICAL WRITERS..... 76–102

CHAPTER IV.

THE VIEWS OF THE BIBLICAL WRITERS (continued).... 103–125

CHAPTER V.

THE BIBLE AND THE SCIENCES OF NATURE..... 126–152

CHAPTER VI.

PAGE

THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE..... 153–184

CHAPTER VII.

THE HISTORIES OF THE BIBLE. 185–228

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE..... 229–256

CHAPTER IX.

THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF THE BIBLE. 257–289

CHAPTER X.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BIBLICAL BOOKS..... 290–330

CHAPTER XI.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE..... 331–362

CHAPTER XII.

THE CANON AND THE TEXT..... 363–405

CHAPTER XIII.

BIBLICAL REVELATION AND INSPIRATION..... 406–421

CHAPTER XIV.

BIBLICAL REVELATION AND INSPIRATION (continued)... 422–442

CHAPTER XV.

PAGE
THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE. 443 475

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION 476-483

APPENDIX.

RECENT CONSERVATIVE VIEWS OF THE ORIGIN OF THE HEXATEUCH..... 485–491

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

INTRODUCTION.

The unlearned but devout Christian believer in this day and land, cherishes a certain view of the English Bible, into the reasons for which he rarely thinks it necessary to inquire. If he be a constant reader of the book, he finds it a matter of frequent experience to derive help from this practice in the conduct of the religious life. Occasionally, really new comprehension of important religious truth breaks into his mind while he is occupied with its familiar and beloved pages. In times of unusual darkness the light of divine guidance and counsel appears to him to shine forth from this or that word of the Lord. When he is oppressed with those sorrows and bereavements which are the lot of all, the sentences poured forth by the suffering saints of Scripture, or, perhaps, by that more than saintly sufferer, the Saviour, meet his needs and greatly console him. But when he is glad at receiving some earthly good, or rejoices in the assured hopes of salvation, he can as

readily find in the same book those jubilant passages which speak responsive to this new mood of the soul. Again, he is roused to sorrow for sin by the searching accusation which the Spirit of purity has administered in Scripture through the experience of some fellow-sinner; or by the contemplation of the words and action of Him who, though He was tempted as we are, was so tempted without sin. Perhaps, when cruelly wronged by others, he essays the difficult task of appropriating to his personal feeling a portion of some imprecatory Psalm; or, wishing to deal with the gainsayer and the immoral, he ventures upon the yet more difficult task of confuting and reproving out of the very mouth of Jehovah. All this use of the sacred writings he makes as one persuaded of their perfect truthfulness.

If such a believer, however, is urged to justify his use of Scripture at the bar of common human judgment, or to commend it to others who do not have the same experience with himself, he immediately finds the way encompassed with unexpected difficulties. He may resort to the expedient of making his own experience, chiefly in the form of religious emotion, the ultimate test of the truth of the Bible. In a word, he may say, "I know that this book is true, because I have found it to be true in my own case." But at once the question will be raised: On what grounds that are reasonable and communicable to other minds do you make your own experience the test or guarantee of universal truth? And, furthermore, precisely *what* is the truth which you think your experience competent to test and guar-

antee? In response to such inquiries, whether proposed by others or by the believer to himself, what all men agree to call good sense, and the fair mind, will certainly compel the making of discriminations. But the work of making discriminations belongs to the judgment; and when one begins to make discriminations one has already abandoned the appeal to individual feeling and resorted to some common standard of judgment.

But there are even more decisive reasons why the Christian cannot rest solely in his own religious feeling for his view of the nature of the Bible. The question is inevitable, *What* truth do you find immediately verified by your experience? To this question only one answer is possible: the only truth *immediately* verified by experience is the truth that the individual is himself affected thus and so. Everything lying outside of this truth is, of course, a matter of inference. But it is judgment or reason that infers, and the inferences reached are good and true only as the judgment is sound judgment, only as the reasons alleged are valid reasons.

A consideration like the foregoing may well lead to the making of yet further distinctions. It is plain that the experience of the believer in the use of the Bible is competent to testify only in a guarded and limited way with reference to the nature of the Bible. For example, the believer may say out of his experience, This particular Psalm moved me to gratitude or penitence; but he cannot, in this way, declare it to have been written by David. He may affirm that his moral nature has been quickened and enlightened by the study of the Mosaic

law; but he cannot, in this way, declare that any part of that law came by Moses. He may lay his hand upon his heart and praise the divine work there as the picture of the Saviour is brought to him by Luke or by John, but he cannot thus justify his confidence that any particular report of our Lord's sayings by these Evangelists is authentic.

What has just been said shows that every devout believer is compelled to appeal in justification for his view of the Bible to grounds lying beyond his own experience of its effect upon himself. This appeal most easily and naturally follows one of two directions. On the one hand, it may be taken to the statements of the Bible. The effort is thus made to justify one's view of the Bible chiefly or solely by the claims which the Bible makes for itself. On the other hand, an appeal may be taken to the consent of other believers. Both these forms of appeal may be legitimate, but they have any binding force only when they are properly limited and intelligently conducted.

The seeker for a satisfactory answer to the question, What is the Bible? cannot too early learn that, strictly speaking, no answer to this question can be gained solely from the Bible itself. Why this is so, will appear more in detail further on. It is enough at present to say that, from the very nature of the case, the Bible does not itself undertake to tell us what the Bible is. This book, indeed, appears before us as one; but it is really a collection of books separated by centuries of time with respect to the date of their origin. Moreover, it was centuries before the collection itself became

united into a whole by the action and usage of the Christian Church. Even the writer of the latest of these books had, therefore, no Bible as a whole before him upon the nature of which he might be inspired to give us a declaration from God.

It follows, therefore, that the task of appealing to the Bible, to tell us what the Bible is, involves the consideration of a multitude of difficult and complicated inquiries of a critical and historical kind. It is a task which the unlearned but devout believer cannot perform for himself; for it involves the making of many discriminations which demand special information and a special training.

But suppose that the same question be referred to that consent of prevalent Christian opinion with which all right-minded persons find it so pleasant, if possible, to be in full agreement. The difficult problem at once presents itself as to the means of ascertaining this consent. The inquirer into this problem may resort to his pastor, or to some other religious teacher, and learn from such an one what it is right for him to think, or "orthodox" to believe, regarding this important matter. Plainly, the value of such teaching will depend upon the fitness of the teacher; for even the declaration as to what is "orthodox" or not orthodox can be fitly given only by one who has made special examination of this particular question.

Let it be supposed, however, that the inquirer seeks to have his general position defined for him in the creed of the communion to which he belongs, or in some one of those most comprehensive and honorable

symbols of faith which have arisen out of the past discussions and compromises of the Christian Church. Every phrase in such creed or symbol will need interpretation in the full light of the historical conditions amidst which it originated. And this work of interpretation requires a penetrating and scholarly acquaintance with the history of the development of Christian doctrine.

In these days other more perplexing tasks seem to stand in the path of one who even begins to look about him for reasons by which to justify his once unquestioning faith in Holy Scripture. The rumors, at least, of objections made by various sciences—sciences of nature, of the mind, of the relations of man to God—and of imperfections discovered by various kinds of criticism—criticism of the text, of the history, of the "lower" and of the "higher" order—are constantly reaching his ears. In this age of making and reading many books, such rumors are sure, sooner or later, to take definite shape and confront him in the black and white outlines of the printed page. The very papers and treatises to which he turns for help in the interpretation of the Bible are full of arguments upon both sides of this subject. The way behind him, the way back to the unquestioning simplicity of an unreasoning faith, seems now to be wholly closed. But before him lies the to him unknown field of modern science and criticism. This field is full of shapes which are all the more threatening and repulsive because they are only vaguely discerned. And, besides, if he enters

that field, who shall be his guide? or where and in what condition will he at the last issue from it?

There can be no doubt that some one or more of the foregoing questionings has disturbed a great and increasing multitude of minds in the present generation of Christian disciples. Such questionings are likely to be taken the more seriously, and to prove the more disturbing, in the case of those who set greater store than others by their own experience in the practical use of the Bible. These persons are easily inclined to seize upon some theory of the nature of the Bible, which will justify the experience, rather than to derive from the experience, and as far only as the experience will go, their own unprejudiced view of its nature.

It is now time to call attention to the truth that the question, What is the Bible? as at present proposed by modern investigation, is much too large and complicated to be answered by the adoption of any theory of its inspiration. This question is primarily a question of fact; or, rather, it is a series of questions of fact that call, each one, for diligent and difficult researches. It is only in view of the results of these researches that, finally, a general opinion as to the nature of the Bible can be maintained at the bar of common judgment on the ground of sufficient reasons. But this modern way of regarding the sacred writings involves a great change from the point of view which was originally taken by that theory of biblical inspiration under the influence of which we are all now living. The essential nature

of the earlier theory was such that it undertook to say what the Bible *must* be, rather than to inquire what the Bible *is*.

An excellent example of the difference between the more modern way of approaching the Bible, and the way adopted by the earlier theory of inspiration, may be taken from the biblical text. The sacred Scriptures having been originally written in the Hebrew and Greek languages, the original text of these Scriptures consisted of a certain form of Hebrew and Greek words. What was that form of words? or—to ask the same question in another way—what is the true text of the Bible? Now, plainly, this question is strictly a question of fact. It is so considered by modern biblical study. But by the earlier theory of inspiration it was rather considered as a question to be answered by the demands of the theory itself. That is to say, whenever the inquiry arose as to precisely what any writer of sacred Scripture said in a particular place, the tendency of the theory was to insist that he *must have said* thus and so, and to fix in this way whatever form of the text seemed most favorable to the theory itself.

Moreover, it was at one time a part of the current theory of inspiration that all the words and letters of the traditional text of the Hebrew Scriptures—including every jot and tittle of it—are important and infallible as the very Word of God. And when, after several generations of conflict among biblical scholars, it was generally admitted that this could not be true, it was still contended that, although the claim might not

hold of the only Hebrew text we really have, it *must* hold of a text which, alas! we have not, and can never expect to have.

What is true of inquiry into the text of the Bible is true of other inquiries into its nature. When, for example, the question arises as to the meaning and fulfilment of any prophecy of Holy Scripture, modern biblical scholarship of the most enlightened kind approaches the inquiry as one of fact. But the before-mentioned theory tended to decide rather, as an inference from its own necessities, what *must* be true as to the meaning and the fulfilment of each prophecy. So, too, when an historical statement of the Bible is in question, modern biblical scholarship considers the inquiry as one of fact. But the before-mentioned theory settled every such inquiry by affirming *à priori*, as it were, with the utmost confidence, that no inquiry could properly be made into the accuracy of any historical statement of the Bible.

It need scarcely be said that this method of modern biblical scholarship is everywhere surely winning its way. Even now there are few, who could be classed among the scholars of Christendom, of whatever creed or sect, that would venture openly and totally to reject this method. All that literature which is ordinarily called "apologetic," and which aims to vindicate in any way the claims of the Bible to be the believer's teacher and guide, is a virtual admission of the rightfulness of this method. For, on this ground, the same thing is fair for the Christian scholar which is fair for the unlearned believer. If one appeals to Cæsar, one

must go before Cæsar. If one argues at all the theory of the infallibility of Scripture, one argues on the only basis of argument which the human mind knows, or of which it can even conceive; one argues on the assumption that one can present "reasons" which will commend themselves to the "reason" of one's fellowmen.

It is true that certain sound arguments for a right view of the nature of the Bible may not be capable of being urged with their full force upon men who have not had a type of experience corresponding to that of the reasoner himself. For example, a certain view of sacred Scripture commends itself, with peculiar cogency, to those who have had a Christian experience. But even in this case it is the *common* experience and *common* judgment of Christians to which the appeal must be taken. *And just as far as we separate the arguments for any view of the nature of the Bible from those considerations which commend themselves to the judgment of all alike, just so far do we remove the advantages of the practical use of the Bible from the reach of a large portion of mankind.*

Modern biblical study raises an inquiry far nobler and more comprehensive than any provided for by a theory merely of biblical inspiration. This inquiry is the one we have proposed to ourselves; it is the inquiry, What is the Bible?

The question as to that mode of operation by which the Divine Spirit was formerly assumed to have placed the history and doctrines of Scripture, in the precise lit-

eral form in which we have them, within the minds of its writers, may indeed be regarded as one that involves an inscrutable mystery. But the modern question, What is the Bible? is one which we may hope in part to answer on the basis of solid and undeniable facts.

Further observation of the action of both unlearned and scholarly believers respecting the fullest inquiry into the nature of the Christian Scriptures, shows that they are alike influenced in their attitude toward the inquiry by its practical religious aspects. Neither can avoid asking, How will the constant use of the Bible for ascertaining Christian truth and for shaping Christian conduct be influenced by the answer arrived at as the result of scientific inquiry? Neither can avoid the hope or the fear that the freest investigation of the facts will modify the practice of the Christian Church in the acceptance of the Bible as its rule of faith and practice. And at this point we seem to have returned to the place whence we set out. That is to say, the critical inquiry of the believer (whether learned or unlearned) into the nature of the Bible, has a permanent and influential reference to his practical use of the Bible.

And now we hasten to express our hearty sympathy with this profound regard for the practical outcome of scientific inquiry into the Bible. Surely no biblical scholar, with the heart of a Christian, could take pleasure in attacking Holy Scripture or in exposing any weaknesses or mistakes which he might think himself to have found therein. Far more than this is true

The large practical outcome of the modern method of investigating the sacred writings—of thoroughly and courageously proposing to them all manner of questions of fact—will be realized in the safer, wiser, and more purifying use of these writings by all believers. It is with the fullest confidence in this outcome that the writer of this book pursues his task; it was in the interest of contributing to this outcome that all its investigations were originally undertaken.

Certain questions are, at this point, in need of at least a preliminary answer; among them are such as follow. Can modern biblical science be trusted to tell us the truth upon this matter? In reply, we assert that it can be trusted to do what its cautious and conscientious students claim that it can do. Modern biblical science does not profess to know all the facts, or even all the facts important to some very desirable conclusions; it does not profess to have equal evidence for all the conclusions which it thinks itself entitled to reach. Like every other historical or critical inquiry, biblical science deals with probabilities of a higher or lower order. Notwithstanding this fact, its researches are now so far advanced that many important statements can be made by it respecting the origin and nature of the sacred writings; and these statements have the highest degree of proof possible in cases of similar kind.

But do the separate conclusions of biblical science admit of being so connected together and so harmonized with each other and with the data derived from other sources, as to give any consistent view of the Bible as a whole? We believe that the affirmative answer to this

question may safely be made. Nothing, however, but trying the experiment can serve to evince the tenable or untenable character of either an affirmative or a negative answer to such a question.

Does the view of the Bible authorized and commended by modern biblical science agree throughout with the familiar and traditional theory of inspiration? It does not; although it embodies all the elements of truth and secures all the practical helpfulness which this theory ever possessed. Does this view of the Bible accord with the attitude of the Church Catholic toward the Bible, as that attitude is taken in the historic symbols and in the writings of its great theologians and practical leaders? The historic symbols of the Church Catholic have not been so framed as to commit its faith to any one theory of inspiration; and the writings of its great teachers and thinkers differ widely upon this point as upon most others. Yet the view commended by modern biblical study is in full agreement with the essential faith of the Church Catholic and of its great teachers and thinkers.

But, finally, will the view commended by modern biblical science lower the Christian's esteem of Holy Scripture, or detract from that use which he now makes of such Scripture in strengthening and informing his religious life, and in shaping his conduct according to the principles of the Gospel? By no means, unless perversely wrested from its right tendencies and perversely applied to wrong uses. Against such wresting and wrong uses it is not in the power of any truth to guard itself. How often, on the other hand, has the history of the

Christian Church shown the most sacred truths of its religion, coupled with the strictest theory of the inspiration of its Scriptures, applied to most unreasonable and even immoral uses!

It is our purpose, then, to examine the Bible in the full light of recent historical and critical inquiries; and to show that these inquiries do not so modify the view to be taken of its origin and nature as to prevent the most helpful and Christian use of its histories and moral and religious teachings. The examination will also confer the incidental benefit of showing how one may accept all the legitimate conclusions of modern biblical study, and yet remain well within the boundaries of a truly catholic faith. And since this is a matter about which most persons are rightly somewhat sensitive, and about which some persons are extremely sensitive, we shall begin the entire examination by considering it in particular. Such consideration is, of course, an historical affair. That is to say, the only way to know what does accord with the faith of the Christian Church, is to appeal to history for an answer to the question.

After completing our historical survey, we shall take the question, What is the Bible? to the Bible itself for an answer. There are two ways of conducting this branch of the inquiry. In the first place, the more direct claims of the sacred writers regarding the characteristics of their teaching and the nature of their inspiration will be examined. In the next place, the more indirect testimony of the facts concerning the origin and nature of the biblical books, as these facts

are brought to light by modern biblical science, will be passed in review. The result of this twofold examination should be what is sometimes called an "inductive theory of inspiration." More correctly expressed, the result should be such a view of the origin and nature of the writings of sacred Scripture as is gained by a scientific survey of its claims and its phenomena.

Finally, attention must be given to those relations in which every view of the Bible stands to kindred views of nearly connected Christian truths. Such most nearly connected truths are those ordinarily summed up in the doctrines of revelation, of inspiration, and of the authority and activity of the Christian Church. Here, again, constant reference must be made to the important part which the satisfaction of Christian experience, and the practical uses of the Bible, bear in the general discussion of its origin and nature.

It will be seen that the place of first consideration in the entire discussion is given to the "facts." And the *facts* must, at all events, be frankly, fearlessly, and constantly kept in view. Any opinion which contradicts them is necessarily false; any opinion which does not take them into the account is certainly erroneous; any opinion which neglects some classes of them is without doubt imperfect. It would be quite unnecessary and wrong, however, to make any pretense of examining these facts in complete indifference to the result of the examination. On the contrary, we neither profess the power nor indulge the wish to separate this examination from the influence of our convictions re-

garding the nature of biblical religion, and regarding the truthfulness of the great doctrines of the Christian faith. It is as *Christians* that we begin this examination; as Christians, with faith confirmed, enlightened, and enlarged, we expect to finish it.

CHAPTER I.

JEWISH AND EARLY CHRISTIAN VIEWS.

From the necessities of the case, no general view of the origin and nature of the Bible could precede the time when the different separate writings of which it is composed had all been finished and collected into a canon of sacred Scripture. A theory of the inspiration of the Bible in the sense we are accustomed to attach to those words, could not originate, therefore, until some time after the Christian era. Nor have we any means of telling precisely what the biblical writers themselves would have thought, in answer to the modern question, What is the Bible? On the other hand, we can discover what was the drift of their sentiment regarding the influence of the Holy Spirit within the mind of man; and regarding some of the characteristics of words spoken or written on sacred subjects by men under the influence of this Spirit.

Substantially the same thing is true of the Jewish and early Christian views as expressed by others than the authors of the biblical books. These views do not have a direct reference to the entire circuit of canonical writings, as we now have these writings gathered together into one Bible. The most important apparent exception to this statement is found in the attitude in which the latest Jewish and early Christian writers stood toward

the Old Testament. But our examination will show that even this exception is only apparent.

There is a preliminary question, however, which cannot be avoided: How much consideration shall be given to Jewish and early Christian writers, outside of the Bible, upon the question of its origin and nature? What weight, in the judgment of a scholar of the nineteenth century, should be attached to the opinion of an uninspired rabbi or Christian bishop, upon a matter such as this? A really judicious answer to this inquiry avoids both of two extremes. The opinion of Jewish rabbi or Christian bishop is in no case an authoritative opinion. In many cases, such an opinion is so much the result of temporary and local influences, of traditional and educated prejudices, that it can be allowed only little if any weight. Quite as often, also, when stripped of its rhetorical, figurative, and emotional embellishments, such opinion appears as a vague sentiment rather than as a deliberate judgment.

On the other hand, the views of the uninspired Jewish and early Christian writers should not be treated with neglect or contempt. Thoroughly understood and properly taken, they may prove of great value and helpfulness to us in the present day. Perhaps their chief value consists in this, that the study of them shows what influences operated upon the minds of the men who, without being by any means fully aware of the meaning of their action, were really engaged in fixing the canons of the Old and New Testaments. Whatever view we may take as to the origin of single books and parts of books, the Bible as *a collection of selected books* came into being

through the body of believers. It cannot fail, then, to be of great value to know what views of inspiration and sacred Scripture were held by the men who may be called the unconscious authors of the Bible, considered as an entire circuit of sacred writings.

Moreover, we proclaim ourselves among those who believe in the perpetual inspiration of the Church of God. And, indeed, without believing heartily in this, no one can intelligently believe in Holy Scripture. For, as has just been said, it was the Church which fixed the circuit of writings to be esteemed as constituting one Holy Scripture.

At this point it is also proper to raise and press another inquiry: Why should a Christian in the nineteenth century have any regard for the ancient creeds and symbols of Christendom? Why should he be in the least sensitive to the question, whether he himself is to be classed among the "orthodox" or the "heretical"? In many cases, alas! the strongest motives to any such regard or sensitiveness are the motives of individual and social interest. But the Christian of right mind and heart has other motives than these for his regard for symbols, for his feeling of sensitiveness before the title of "heretic." He sincerely desires to be united in opinion and affection with God's people. To be separated from other believers brings pain to any genuine Christian heart. But this experience is reasonable only upon the supposition that the Spirit of God abides in the Church of God, instructing it what is true to think and right to do.

On the other hand, to accept with unquestioning

faith, or to refuse to reconsider any particular view held by the Church in the past, is as unreasonable as it is unsafe. The faith of the Church is a progressive affair. Its essentials are indeed fixed; but the more fixed and united upon any of its doctrines the whole Christian Church is seen to be, the simpler and fewer are the doctrines upon which it appears thus fixed and united. This remark applies with peculiar force and appropriateness to the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible. Upon only a few subjects, and those the most essential as well as the broadest and dimmest in respect to fixed scientific outline, is there a consensus of the views of believers in all ages. For in this matter of inquiry as in others, the Spirit of God still leads His people into a fuller knowledge and a wiser and safer practice.

The earliest outside view, as it were, of the inspiration of any of the Old-Testament Scriptures is to be found in the Old-Testament Apocrypha. It is one among many proofs of the inferiority of apocryphal and Talmudic writings to the canonical writings of the Old Testament that the former, as compared with the latter, tend to take more extravagant and untenable, and less distinctively moral and spiritual views of inspiration and of sacred writings.

There can be no doubt that the apocryphal books of the Old Testament have a high esteem for the more ancient Hebrew writings.* It is, however, "the Law" (the law of Moses) which they praise in the highest terms, and to which they attribute the first grade of inspira-

* For the doctrine of sacred Scripture held by the Apocrypha, see D. S. S., ii., p. 20 f.

tion. To it "the Prophets," although highly regarded and also deemed sacred, are considered inferior; while the other writings of our Old Testament are comparatively little mentioned. The military leader of the time cheers and consoles the people out of "the Law and the Prophets"; the same sacred writings, in the life of the devout family, are a source of domestic instruction. The reason for their excellence is to be found in the divine wisdom, which has been given solely or chiefly to Israel, and the declarations and results of which are embodied in these writings. But the product of divine wisdom in Moses far surpasses all others, even the other books of the sacred Hebrew antiquity.

We cannot infer from statements like the foregoing that the Jews regarded themselves as having a fixed number of books which were all alike produced by a special gift of the divine Spirit to their authors. On the contrary, they make declarations which plainly show that such was not their view. Some of the apocryphal writings abound in ascriptions of divine inspiration to the elders of the nation generally, to patriarchs, as well as to Moses and the prophets. By its enkindling, Daniel delivered the innocent, and the worthies of the nation became valorous in battle, or skilful in the councils of state. Nothing is anywhere said or implied of any kind of inspiration peculiar to the scribe, or of any work of dictating either the substance or the words of what he has written.

Moreover, in one passage (2 Macc. ii. 13), "the letters of kings (Persian monarchs) concerning votive offerings," simply because they contain the record of the

divine dealings with Israel, are regarded as sacred Scripture. The author of another apocryphal book (Sirach) speaks of himself as undergoing a preparation, by study of the Law and the Prophets, to "pour out doctrine as prophecy," and leave it to all ages forever.

The view of the Talmudic writings is a more developed form of the distinctively Jewish opinion. But these writings are such a sea of salt water and mire, that any drag-net cast into it will bring forth many and strange kinds of things. A great variety of opinions can, therefore, be gathered from the Talmud, according to the place where the opinions are found expressed, the date of the composition of its different parts, etc. Nevertheless, all parties among the Jews considered Holy Scripture as a book of life, and found in it the proofs of their disputed opinions—each, after the fashion of modern religious sects, asserting itself to be a true child of the Bible.*

The same distinction of grades in the different parts of Scripture, which is indicated in the Apocrypha of the Old Testament, is made a matter of express teaching in the Talmudic writings. The prophetic writings are frequently distinguished from the Law as inferior to it; they are placed only in the second rank of revelation. They are held to be of the nature of tradition. Accordingly, it is expressly forbidden by the Talmud to keep the Law and the Books of the Prophets in the same manuscript case, or to lay a roll of the Prophets on top of a roll of the Law. The rabbis attributed to Moses a different inspiration from that ascribed to any other of

* D. S. S., ii., p. 29 f.

the writers of the Hebrew Scriptures. God either wrote all the Law with His own hand or else dictated it word for word to Moses as His amanuensis. Whoever supposes that a single verse of it is spoken by Moses of himself is to be regarded as a denier and despiser of the divine word.

The rabbinical doctrine of prophetic inspiration applies not only to those books which we call "the Prophets" (from Isaiah to Malachi), but also to the historical books (from Joshua to Kings). These are all ascribed by the Talmud to men gifted with the prophetic spirit of inspiration. But the inspiration of these books is regarded as decidedly inferior to that of the Mosaic Law. Whether the Talmudic writings place the other books of the Old Testament (the so-called "Hagiographa") on an equality, with respect to their inspiration, with the prophetic writings, is a disputed matter. Probably the correct answer depends upon the particular one of the Talmudic writings to which we refer the question. Even after the time of Christ, we find the rabbis debating whether Canticles and Ecclesiastes have the same sanctity as the other biblical writings.

The rabbinical doctrine finally developed a tripartite division of the sacred books, according to the grade of inspiration which produced them. At the same time its view of the nature of inspired writings changed until certain wild fables gained currency, concerning the manner in which these writings were produced. Such a wild fable is the rabbinical story that God taught the entire Bible, as well as the Talmud, to Moses, and then bade him teach it to Israel, although refusing to allow

him to write it down lest the Gentiles might steal it. Yet the Talmud is, on the whole, less extravagant in its theory of inspiration than is Philo. The Christian believer of to-day, however, will find little to receive unmodified from the Jewish rabbis as to the nature of his Bible. Nor can he fail to regret that in some respects these rabbis influenced so strongly the views of the earl Christian fathers.

It would not be worth the time required to consider what Philo and Josephus thought upon these subjects, were it not that they may be regarded as representative, in some sort, of views prevalent at about the Christian era. The view of the former as to the divine origin and authority of the Hebrew Scriptures in general is indicated by the titles he applies to them. He frequently speaks of them as "sacred writings," or of some portion of them as a "sacred book," "sacred word," "sacred saying." Yet he obviously favored the opinion which ascribed different grades of authority and excellence to different portions of the Old Testament. Accordingly, Philo quotes the Law most frequently, and with most flourish of approval, as it were. Ezekiel and Daniel he neglects; and does not cite Esther, Ecclesiastes, or Canticles as sacred Scripture. In these respects his view seems in accord with the prevalent doctrine among the Jewish rabbis.

In spite of these distinctions, however, Philo regards the Old Testament as a divine whole, penetrated with the spirit of wisdom, and constituting one holy and divine Word. It is with reference to his more definite theory of the nature of the inspired mental state that Philo distinguishes himself from the views already ex-

amined. In order that the prophet may be prepared for inspiration, it is necessary, he holds, for reason to abandon the citadel of the soul.* When the divine light is to shine, the human light must wholly set. It appears that Philo considered the entire Old Testament to have been composed by its authors when in this condition of unconscious ecstasy.

And yet Philo believed that the same inspiration and divine gift of prophecy were not limited to a few, but extended to others than the writers of the Hebrew Scriptures. "The holy Word bestows the gift of prophecy upon every notably wise man"; and this gift carries with it, in his judgment, the condition of unconscious ecstasy. Philo also speaks of his own inspired states. Sometimes when he has been writing he has himself been seized with divine inspiration and has then uttered oracles. He has become altogether ignorant of place, of those present, of himself, and of what was said and written. The inspiration of the translators of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, of the so-called "Seventy," was of this nature according to Philo. They, too, were prophets, and made the translation in a condition of prophetic ecstasy.

The peculiarities of Philo's view of inspiration are a development of the Platonic philosophy. All antiquity ascribed the extraordinary faculties and virtues of gifted men—whether they consisted of wisdom in conduct, skill in art, or insight into truth; or else took the form of producing sacred literature—to the inbreathing of the Divine Spirit. But it was the special feature of the Platonic theory to hold that a man cannot become a

* D. S. S., ii., p. 39 f.

poet, or utter an oracle, until he has been divested of his own reason so that God may speak through him. In Philo, as well as in the Talmud, we find little genuine wheat after much beating of straw.

The views which Josephus entertained concerning the nature of the Hebrew Scriptures are chiefly derived from one passage in his book "Contra Apionem" (i. 8). In his opinion of the nature of inspiration and sacred Scripture, Josephus is much less extravagant than Philo. He clearly asserts the divine origin and characteristics of the Old Testament; although he does not clearly describe the manner of this origin, or the precise nature of these characteristics. Like the Jewish rabbis in general, Josephus considered Moses a prophet in a pre-eminent sense, such as belongs to no other Hebrew writer. He not only distinguishes the prophets from Moses, but also introduces a distinction into the ranks of the prophets themselves. He further distinguishes between a prophet as a receiver of revelation, and a prophet as a scribe. With respect to the normal prophetic state, Josephus appears to agree with Philo in holding that it is one of complete unconsciousness. But the prophet, in writing down his own prophecies, is represented simply as taking pains to put on record accurately what he had previously spoken prophetically.

Like all the writers upon this subject in this era, Josephus ascribes prophetic inspiration to others than the authors of the Old Testament. John Hyrcanus, he thinks, had the gift of prophecy, and was so conversant with Deity, that nothing in the future escaped him

Josephus also regarded himself as an inspired prophet of no mean order; he considered that he had received prophetic dreams divinely induced, and had fallen into conditions of prophetic ecstasy.

It appears, then, that from the very first the ascription of prophetic inspiration was generously made; no one thought it necessary to restrict the divine gift to certain writers of Scriptures alone deemed sacred. It also appears that distinctions were allowed as to the relative excellence and authority of these Scriptures and as to the kind and grade of inspiration possessed by the writers. It appears, further, that inspiration was attributed primarily to the persons regarded as divine agents, in war and in the State, in respect to what was wise to think and right to do; and that the conception of an inspiration peculiar to the scribe and consisting of a divine dictation of his words, is an invention chiefly of Jewish rabbis and of a Gentile philosophy.

On turning to the fathers of the ancient Christian Church, we find some relief from certain crudities and extravagances belonging to the views we have been considering. It was a misfortune, however, for the development of the early Christian doctrine of sacred Scripture that its expounders and advocates followed so closely the fashion of Jewish rabbis and Greek philosophers rather than the indications given by the authors of the Bible itself. But this was inevitable; for, like all teachers of religious truth, the fathers of the ancient Church were children of their own day.

These Church fathers belong to diverse schools of learning, which had their seats at Antioch, Alexandria,

Athens, Rome, Lyons, and Carthage; it is to be expected, therefore, that on many points, chiefly of minor importance, their views will differ. At the same time, they were all believers in Christianity, and in the historical and doctrinal truths of those writings with whose fate the development of Christianity was so intimately connected. A certain unity of view accordingly prevails among them upon essential truths. As to the nature of the Bible, however, no one well-developed doctrine exists in the ancient Church, although a marked uniformity of opinion on some essential points may be everywhere traced.

In the earlier times of the Christian Church, both a stricter and a freer view of inspiration may be detected; and from the time of Origen (185–254 A.D.) onward, two contrary tendencies appear. One of these tendencies was toward the legal and traditional way of regarding the Bible; the other toward a more critical and speculative way. This divergence in tendencies appears very early. For example, the Epistle of Polycarp, although it contains many words of Christ and the Apostles, nowhere cites the Old Testament as sacred Scripture; and the Ignatian Epistles even warn us against resting our belief in the Gospel upon our ability to cite the Old Testament for all the Christian doctrines. But the Epistle of Barnabas treats the Hebrew writings with the veneration of an orthodox Jewish rabbi.

To understand the views of early fathers of the Christian Church, it is necessary to know something of the historical position in which they were placed Even as far back as the days of the apostles James and

Paul, a difference of view concerning the relations of the Gospel to the religion of the Old Testament had arisen within the Church. Some Christian teachers laid more emphasis on the unity of the Gospel with the Hebrew religion; others laid more emphasis on the difference of the two. The attitude of these two parties toward the Hebrew writings was necessarily influenced by their view of the nature of the Hebrew religion, and of its relation to the Gospel.

Moreover, on the borders of the Church Catholic, sometimes just inside and sometimes outside, there existed various sects. Some of them were Judaizing; others were Gnostic. The latter separated Judaism and Christianity, and allied Christianity with Gentile philosophy—in an extreme way. A hard and long struggle with these sects took place. Some of the more influential of the fathers sympathized with one sect, and others sympathized rather with an opposed sect. In the meantime, the new religion had also to define its relation toward a variety of conflicting views on ethical and religious subjects which had arisen and flourished on heathen ground. Is it strange, then, that many shades of opinion are to be found, often expressed in a heated, overwrought, and highly rhetorical way, within the literature of ancient Christendom? What is now understood as biblical science did not exist; the time for a comprehensive and well-established doctrine of the origin and nature of its sacred writings had not yet arrived in the history of the Church.

On certain main matters of opinion, however, the ancient Christian Church was in substantial unity; espe-

cially was its attitude of heart toward the truths of the Gospel, and toward the holy writings which preserve and convey these truths, both warm and concordant. Such unity of thought and feeling expressed itself, though in a rather vague way, by speaking of these writings as "divine," "God-inspired," or "heavenly." It was generally held that there is a certain organic oneness and perfection of parts in Scripture.* By the "perfection" of Scripture, we are to understand that quality which belongs to a beautiful whole made up of the right number of parts. To this beautiful and concordant whole, not even the smallest of the parts is insignificant. Irenæus, for example, thinks that nothing in the Bible is vain, or without significance, or without some argument in it. And Origen cannot believe that the Evangelist would, without some precise purpose, represent the blind man as *throwing off his coat* when he came to Jesus.

As to the unity and difference of the two Testaments, there was among the fathers of the early Church considerable variation of view; though the general doctrine of the Church held to the essential unity of the Old and the New. The principal point insisted upon was that the Gospel is *true* Old-Testament religion, and that Christians are the *true* Israel. The highest purpose of the Law was found in the service it renders, by furnishing types and symbols which point to Christ. The early Church laid the greatest emphasis on the Prophets, however; and in this pre-eminent regard for them rather than

* D. S. S., ii., p. 57 f.

for the Law of Moses, it departed in the right direction from the views of Philo and the Jewish rabbis.

As a matter of express doctrine, the early Church did not question the "infallibility" of Scripture; but we are not to understand this term in the precise sense which has been most frequently attached to it since the period after the Reformation. It would be wrong and audacious, they argued, to wish to amend the words of the Spirit. The infallibility of Scripture was then, in their minds, a natural and naïve deduction from their conception of inspiration. And yet, in the work of studying the Bible in detail, the fathers of the Church met with biblical facts which forced them to occasional explanations or admissions destructive of their main argument. The use of the allegorical interpretation was, however, their unfailing resort in all such cases of difficulty. Thus, Origen could speak in the highest terms of the inspiration of the Hebrew Bible, in every jot and tittle of its contents, and yet, also, speak of "scandals and offences and impossibilities" as cleaving to its letter. But such things were to be smoothed over by being understood in a mystical way.

Some of the heretical writings of the age went so far as to make a direct attack on the trustworthiness of the Hebrew Scriptures. We find the "Clementine Homilies," for example, complaining of the prophecies of the Old Testament as obscure, foolish, inglorious; the so-called Mosaic laws are affirmed to have been written five hundred years after Moses, (although it ought not to be said in *public* that these chapters were added so late to the Bible, lest the unlearned multitudes be

disturbed). The intent of this depreciation of the Old Testament was relatively to exalt the genuine Christian teaching.

As to the nature of inspiration, the early Christian writers held, as a rule, the same mechanical view which we have already found to have been held by Philo and the Jewish rabbis. In this way must we interpret their habitual use of such titles as "organs of the divine voice," "mouth of God," etc., for apostles and prophets. They are also fond of representing the Spirit of God as using its human instruments as the player does his lyre or flute, or as the scribe uses the reed with which he writes. It has been said, for example, that there is only one passage in all the works of Justin Martyr in which any due account is taken of the conscious and free powers of a Hebrew writer. In spite of this, however, the Church-fathers, as a rule, did not follow the neo-Platonic philosophy of Philo into its worst excesses;* they did not as a rule hold that the state of inspiration is one of frenzy or unconscious ecstasy. Indeed, a certain book seems to have been written in this age expressly to confute the opinion that the prophet must be in a state of ecstasy.

It was the universal belief of the ancient Church that the writers of sacred Scripture were inspired men; the apostles and prophets, however, were pre-eminently gifted with inspiration. Yet it is clear that the claim of Scripture to special authority and significance could not in this age have been based upon the special inspiration of its authors; for the fathers of this age freely

* D. S. S., ii., p. 71 f.

attributed inspiration in exactly the same terms to many others besides the biblical writers. Whether genuine prophetic inspiration had been given to the *Gentile* world was indeed a disputed question. Some of the Christian fathers, like Tertullian, habitually express themselves with heat, contempt, and odium of Gentile philosophers and poets; others, like Clement of Alexandria, take a far different view. One ancient writer speaks of no fewer than thirty-five specially inspired prophets, and regards himself as receiving divine prophetic revelations. Another, while professing his own inferiority to the apostles, still affirms his ability to know the heavenly mysteries by inspiration; he declares himself not to have written after the flesh, but after the judgment of God.

From the foregoing view of inspiration, it naturally follows that the claim to be considered as inspired prophetic writing should not be confined to the canonical Hebrew Scriptures alone. We actually find the fathers of the ancient Church correlating historical statements taken from the apocryphal with those taken from the canonical books of the Old Testament and co-ordinating prophecies from *pseudo*-prophetic writings with those from the Hebrew prophets by applying the same sacred formula of citation to both. One writer interweaves words from the apocryphal Fourth Ezra with those from a canonical writing, and introduces them with a "thus saith the Lord" as words found in "another prophet." Justin Martyr quotes the prophecies of the Sibyl and Hystaspis as inspired and authoritative; Athenagoras speaks of the Sibyl *and the rest of the*

prophets. Clement of Alexandria repeatedly quotes apocryphal books with the most sacred formula, as "divine wisdom," "divine Scripture," etc. Origen quotes the "Wisdom of Solomon" as though it were canonical, and speaks of Maccabees, Tobit, and Judith as inspired writings. Cyprian of Carthage, too, regarded Tobias, Baruch, Maccabees, and the Wisdom of Solomon as inspired.*

Facts like those just mentioned show us how free and even "loose," as some would say, were the notions of the ancient Church regarding the writings called inspired in the highest sense; and, at the same time, how strict and even extravagant were their notions of the nature of all inspiration and inspired Scripture. These facts do not indicate that the Old Testament was held by the Church-fathers in no special veneration; but they do indicate that the special veneration which these fathers gave it was not due to its being the product of a special kind of inspiration. Their superior regard for it was due chiefly to the fact that its prophecy and history bore witness in a special way to the Gospel and to Christ.

It was a striking but necessary result of the historical position of the early Christian Church that for some time it did not regard the New-Testament writings as on a par, so far as what is distinctive of sacred Scripture is concerned, with the writings of the Old Testament. Nothing can be clearer than this fact is made

* For other examples of the way in which the fathers of the Church at this time correlated *extra*-biblical writings with the canonical, as alike inspired and sacred, see D. S. S., ii., p 86 f.

by reading works like those of Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Tatian, and Athenagoras. In these works, the phrases "thus saith the Lord," etc. (with which the Hebrew Scriptures are quoted), give way to formulas, when quoting the New-Testament Scriptures, that bring the personality of the author more distinctly to view.* Clement of Rome, for example, exhorts the Corinthians to receive the epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle, and speaks of its injunctions as "spiritually" given; but when quoting the words of First Corinthians (ii. 9) he uses the formula "God saith," because the sentiment of this passage is plainly taken from the ancient sacred Scripture of Isaiah (lxiv. 4).

In their interpretation of the Hebrew Bible the fathers of the ancient Church almost without exception followed the mischievous and misleading method of Jewish rabbis and the neo-Platonic Philo. They allegorized without reason, stint, or good taste. The Hebrew text becoming almost wholly unknown, and a Greek translation which abounds in errors and obscurities being substituted for it, these very errors and obscurities were made the subjects of new allegories.

This sort of so-called "interpretation" has been the bane of Christendom. The Christian reader of to-day should understand that such a method of escaping the force of the difficulties of the Bible, or of using it for doctrine and edification, is more nearly allied to what is Jewish and even heathenish than to what is distinctively Christian. The allegorical interpretation was thought

* D. S. S., i., p. 81 f.

necessary in the times of the early Church, because the Jewish and Judaizing opponents of Christianity strove to wrest from it those proofs in the prophetic Hebrew Scriptures upon which it so much relied. One of their weapons for attacking the Christian faith came at last to consist in a more strictly literal interpretation of ancient prophecy. It was, in part, under the influence of such exigencies that a developed theory of the relation between the letter and the higher meaning of the sacred writings was produced.

But as a modern scholar has remarked, the allegorical interpretation is "a sword that cuts both ways." By the allegorical interpretation the most extravagant heresies justified their teaching; and even gross immoralities could thus appeal to the Bible for support. The Church was obliged then to limit this arbitrary fashion of reading any and all things into the Bible; but since it did not reject the whole principle as false and dangerous, its very limitations had to be somewhat arbitrarily fixed. The fact aided in giving rise to churchly and dogmatic control of Scripture.

We see, then, that the ancient Christian Church had no developed doctrine of sacred Scripture, no one self-consistent view with respect to its details. As to the Old Testament, it derived its opinion of the nature of inspiration and holy writings largely from the traditional opinions of the preceding age. But it escaped some of the worst extravagances of the views of the Talmud and of Philo. Of the New-Testament writings, however, the Church took a more fresh, untrammelled, and distinctively Christian view. It seems a pity that

these early teachers did not come to regard the whole Bible from the distinctively Christian point of view rather than from that traditional point of view which was, at first, applied only to the Old Testament. Moreover, it was largely the necessities of its position which determined certain elements of the opinion of the Church. It had to defend the Bible against Judaizing and Gnostic heresies, and commend it to inquiring Jews and Gentiles. From this fact, however, came certain genuine elements of the first growth in the Christian doctrine of sacred Scripture.

The formative period which we have just considered, was followed by a period in which all the Christian doctrines underwent a hardening process in preparation for the Middle Ages. The time which lies between 250 A.D. and 600 A.D. shows in a more marked way the same conflict, which we have already noted, between the more dogmatic and the more free and speculative tendencies, in answer to the question, What is the Bible? But a certain crystallization of all the elements which influence the answer is also plainly observable. The judgment of the Church concerning the extent of the Bible becomes pronounced in the declarations of her influential teachers, and in her councils and synods. The canon of sacred Scripture is now more strictly defined. The theological use of the Bible also is made more prominent. The Church undertakes to say how the Bible *must* be interpreted in accordance with a churchly standard of faith.

During this period—and how often in this regard as in others does history seem to repeat itself—it was at

the East, where more of learning and philosophical culture existed, that the more truly liberal views of sacred Scripture for a time prevailed. But the Christian Church was engaged in a tremendous struggle; and practical and dogmatic considerations finally triumphed over those which had regard rather to truth as ascertained by free and scholarly inquiry. Notwithstanding this fact, the influence of men like Origen and the writers of the school of Antioch was very powerful in the Eastern Church; the same influence was considerable, although not so powerful, in the Western Church.

Church-fathers like Athanasius and Eusebius manifest strongly the tendency to use the Old Testament as a book of proof-texts for the establishment of theological opinion. These *proofs*, however, require the allegorical interpretation in order to be usable in this way. Eusebius, for example, thinks that even the superscriptions of the Psalms in the Greek translation have a hidden theological meaning.

The inclination to find all manner of mysteries and types in the Old Testament spread widely in the Christian Church of this period. Even in the Western communion not a few pupils of Origen in this respect are found. When the practical use of Christians brought the Psalms into that position of almost supreme regard which they have maintained ever since, the same method of allegorical interpretation was diligently applied to them. For example, the *superscription* of the eighth Psalm, "concerning the wine-vats," was referred to the vessels prepared for new

fruits which the Spirit of God creates out of men. Some went so far (for example, Ambrose of Milan, † 397), as to dispense with all fixed principles of language in interpreting the sacred Hebrew writings. Eden is the soul, man is the body; Adam is the intellectual and Eve the sensuous principle. The queens in Canticles are the souls of the patriarchs; the concubines are the souls of the ancient prophets. An occasional true note was struck, however, amid this medley of strange and intoxicating sounds. Here and there a writer, like Basil, truly named "the Great," shows a disposition to abide by the verbal and grammatical meaning of the Bible.

Two names stand pre-eminent for influence during the latter part of this period, and even for centuries afterward; they are Augustine and Jerome. The former became a predominating authority in theology, and a leader in the stricter organization of the discipline and dogmas of the Church. The latter was the most learned man in biblical matters to which the ancient Church can refer.*

The influence of Augustine upon the development of the doctrine of sacred Scripture was indeed deservedly powerful; but it was in many respects very bad. He knew nothing of Hebrew, and had only a very limited critical knowledge of Greek. He looked on the Bible, not chiefly as a devout Christian scholar does, but rather as does the dogmatist interested in using it to secure certain practical ecclesiastical ends. He knew that the text of the Greek translation of the Old Testament differed in

* D. S. S., ii., p. 110 f.

many places from the Hebrew; but he tried to persuade himself that these differences were due to a divine dispensation. He regarded the attempt of Jerome to translate the Hebrew directly into Latin as dangerous. Much of his own interpretation of Scripture is a strange mixture of allegorizing and rationalizing. To him clouds are prophets and teachers; oxen are prophets and apostles; birds are spiritual proud men; and bulls are heretics. To what lower depths can the "spiritualizing" of Scripture descend than to regard the drunkenness of Noah as a type of the passion of our Lord?

Augustine's view of the Bible was dominated by his interest in dogmatic and practical expedients, by his desire to tone up others in theological opinion and ecclesiastical discipline. No error must be admitted to have occurred in the canonical writers; "faith will totter if the authority of the divine Scriptures wavers." If anything there seems untrue, Augustine is ready to hold that the manuscript is corrupt, the version is false; or else he cannot understand the passage. And yet he expressly declares that the whole dispensation of the Bible is temporal, and he who is himself perfected by faith, hope, and charity, will have no need of the Bible, *except for instructing and disciplining others!*

The scholar, Jerome,* undertook the laudable but then extremely difficult task of translating the Old Testament into Latin from the original text, rather than from the obscure and debased text of the Greek version. At the time when he began this task, the

* D. S. S., ii., p. 115 f

condition of the Latin text in use was most pitiful. The use of Greek in the West, which had been common in the first centuries of the Christian Church, had been nearly abandoned. Irresponsible persons had been recklessly busy with the Latin text; they had emended and altered it until it had almost as many forms as there were manuscripts containing it. The same prejudice then existed against having traditional errors corrected, which has always existed, and which exists even now. It is not strange, therefore, that the work of Jerome was done in a timid and vacillating way. Yet, on the whole, Jerome's translation was a great gift to the Latin-speaking part of the Christian Church. It was at the time little appreciated and much decried. But his wrongs were finally avenged in history; for this very translation was in its turn pronounced inspired.

In his view of the nature of the Bible, and in his interpretation of it, Jerome shared the notions of his own time. He, too, held that the apparent historical and moral blemishes of the Old Testament must be covered over by the allegorical interpretation. The geographical difficulties of the stations in the wilderness he would dispose of in this way: they are to be interpreted spiritually. How otherwise are we to understand the fact that, according to the chronology of the Greek version, Methuselah must have lived for fourteen years after the Flood, and yet did not enter the ark with Noah; or the fact that Hagar treats Ishmael like a suckling, and carries him on her back, although he was eighteen years of age?

The existence of the so-called "school of Antioch,"

in this period, is a remarkable fact. This school was noteworthy for the originality and truthfulness of its methods of interpreting the Bible, and so for the comparative justness of its view of the nature of the Bible. Its founder, however, was condemned (although not until after his death) as a heretic, in a truly infamous fashion; its influence upon the doctrine of sacred Scripture in the subsequent history of the Christian Church was, most unfortunately, of little account. The "school," so far as it can appropriately be designated by this title, is to be referred to the work, in interpreting the Bible, of Theodore of Mopsuestia († 429). He was an open and intelligent opponent of the mystical interpretation. When he assumed that there are different grades of inspiration and value in the Hebrew Scriptures, he only returned to the more ancient view. To all the writings that go by Solomon's name, he ascribed only the gift of wisdom; he was forced to view these writings in this way as soon as he abandoned the mystical interpretation. He anticipated the principle which was afterward widely adopted, viz., that the fulfilment and not the text of a prophecy decides as to its Messianic character.

Several pupils in this so-called "school of Antioch," were by no means so consistent as its founder had been. But if we class the great preacher Chrysostom, the "golden-mouthed" pulpit orator, among their number, we must assign him a high place indeed. His biblical culture was genuine and thorough; but like every good preacher, the practical work of building up Christian character by use of the Bible was uppermost in his thought and utterance. He was essentially faithful to

the historical meaning of the sacred Hebrew writings; his view of the nature of the witness of these writings to Christ was, therefore, moderate and concessive. Although believing in and practicing a minute and reverential study of the Bible, Chrysostom thought it enough to adhere to the general purpose of the writer. Paul he regarded as the teacher of the world and the harp of the Spirit; but he does not hesitate to say of some of Paul's words that they were spoken humanly, and that the apostle did not throughout enjoy grace.

By the close of this period the view of the Christian Church as to the origin, nature, and right uses of the Bible had taken that fixed shape in which it was to remain, substantially unchanged, until the time of more immediate preparation for the Protestant Reformation. The principal characteristics of this view are, that dogmatic considerations determined the ends to be secured, the opinions to be formed, by the Church's use of the Bible; while the allegorical interpretation furnished the means for securing these ends and forming these opinions. Moreover, the means for limiting the use of allegory were found in the dogma itself. And so tradition—that is, what the Church had formerly held and now taught against the sects and heretics—came to be regarded as authoritative, and in time practically subordinated even the Scriptures themselves.

Meanwhile, the current views as to the nature of inspiration, and the relation of the two Testaments, underwent no essential change. But those portions of the Old Testament that were found most available for Christian worship, and for the building up of the re-

ligious life, became relatively more prominent. These are especially the Psalms and certain of the prophecies. The ancient and important distinction between *canonical* Scripture and *inspired* Scripture gradually faded away. The Church tradition was coming more and more to take the place of a vital and constant faith in the indwelling Spirit as teaching the heart of the believer through the truth of the divine Word.

For the claims of sober grammatical and historical interpretation, such as the present age demands of all Christian scholars, only a few names can be cited in all this period. But certain influences in the direction of such an interpretation were left behind by the school of Antioch, although this school, as a definite, recognized movement, had been suppressed. The more diligent study and enlarged use of the Bible for the practical ends of the Christian life are the only encouraging results reached by the growth of the Church's experience during these centuries.

And for centuries after the close of this period, and indeed until the dawning of the Reformation era appears, the cause of biblical study made almost no progress. It has been said that from the death of Gregory the Great (604 A.D.) to the age called scholastic, not a single writer arose who entered upon any independent path of research. Almost without exception everything taught about the Bible during these centuries was borrowed from the past—chiefly from the great authorities, Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, etc.

"Interpretation" of the Bible came to consist in stringing together bits of comment taken from the ear

lier fathers, and etymological conceits which made it possible to find sacred mysteries in scriptural passages that otherwise have little significance. It is this that Bede the Venerable meant when he spoke of the "fertility" of Scripture as such that a single verse will often "fill many pages with the sweetness of its spiritual and inner meaning."* Occasional gleams of sober historical sense, however, may be seen upon the pages of some of these writers; and, in rare instances, there appears a token of an appreciation of the difficulties of the prevalent view. Meanwhile the practical use of the Bible had lamentably declined.

The value of this practical use of the Bible began somewhat more to be dwelt upon by writers of the twelfth and succeeding centuries. Thus we are told in a beautiful way, by one author of this time, that "faith in Christ shed abroad in the heart is the lamp and door for the whole Bible." The first faint and infrequent rays of light expand into broader and brighter bands of light during the two centuries just preceding the Reformation. The love of learning was now increasing and spreading abroad; the knowledge of Greek and of the Oriental languages was penetrating the universities, and chairs for the teaching of this knowledge were being founded in the great schools, like those of Paris, Bologna, and Salamanca. But it was not the reading of the Bible by the people which produced the Reformation; it was the Reformation itself which procured the reading of the Bible.

Two or three names only deserve mention in all these

*D. S. S., ii., p. 140.

centuries. The sources of scientific information then being opened were applied to the study of Scripture in a more noteworthy way by the celebrated work of Nicolas Lyra († 1340). It is he of whom a facetious couplet, in Latin, declared that if this "*lyre*" had not played, Luther would not have danced. Wycliffe, too, has the high honor of holding the great truth that "all things necessary in Scripture are contained in its proper literal and historical sense." He founded his regard for the Old Testament on deference to the authority of Christ. But even he indulged himself in mysteries and allegories after the fashion of his time.

The influence of Holy Scripture was by no means lost, however, during this age, not inappropriately regarded as so "dark." Many monks and religious devotees saw Christ therein, although they looked through its words as through a misty atmosphere of dogmatism, legend, and fable. The people received and were helped by the biblical truth as it sifted into their minds—mixed, indeed, with much error—through the homilies of the preachers of these times.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE REFORMATION UNTIL NOW.

The bursting forth of the call to Reformation sent abroad many new ideas as to the nature of the Bible. These ideas are to be found permeating, as a kind of vital influence, the writings of those great men to whom the modern age is so much indebted—such as Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Calvin. In trying to understand the declarations of these men, however, certain facts need always to be borne in mind. The age was one of great ferment of new opinion. The views taken of the Bible were formed in the heat of the most intense partisan controversy. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics were pushed to extremes of sentiment and utterance by their conflicts with each other, and by the exigencies of the times. The foremost leaders among the Protestants expressed themselves with great strength of conviction rather than with the equable and calm comprehensiveness which we require of the modern biblical scholar.

It is most important to notice that the theological teachers of the Reformation plainly distinguished between canonical Scripture and the "Word of God" which it contains. They did this because they desired to rescue the *Gospel* from all the entangling bonds of ecclesiastical tradition. This led them to recognize the

Bible, rather than the authority of the Church with its collection of dogmas and precedents, as giving the rule of Christian faith and life. It was, therefore, the Bible as conveying this word of God to every believer which they wished to elevate to the supreme place of influence and authority.

Luther says many things which are quite without real meaning, unless we understand him as holding the distinction between the biblical writings and God's word. He declares that the doctrine of him who preaches Christ is apostolic, although the preacher were Judas or Herod. He ranks the books of the Bible according to the relation which they sustain to the essential truth of the Gospel. The New Testament is to be placed before the Old; the Messianic contents of the Old Testament are to be placed before its other contents. He introduces broad distinctions, based upon this principle, into the New Testament itself. Of the Gospel and Epistle of John, the Epistles of Paul—especially to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians—he says: "These are the books which show thee Christ, and which will teach everything which thou needest to know, although thou never hearest or seest any other book or doctrine." The truth of the Bible becomes a "word of God" to us, only as we "consider to whom the God's-word is spoken."

So, too, it is only in the most general and indefinite way that Calvin* identifies the Bible with the Word of God. And when Zwingli claims permanent authority for the Scriptures, it is of their truth, especially touching

*D. S. S., ii., p. 155.

the Gospel, that he is speaking. The earlier great symbolic statements of the Reformation—including the Augsburg Confession, and the Major Catechism—distinguish between the written Bible and the divine message which it, as a vessel, holds. It was in view of this distinction that these reformers regarded Scripture as the source of authority, as a "fountain," a "judge," a "test-stone" of Christian doctrine and practice.

The perspicuity of Scripture was also made prominent by the Swiss and German reformers of the sixteenth century. This doctrine, as it was held by Luther and other teachers, before it hardened into a dogma, was very closely related to the distinction between canonical writings and the Word of God. The Bible is clear enough, Luther held, so far as the spiritual necessities of the believer are concerned. It interprets itself by means of its central truths.

On the difference of the two Testaments and the inferiority of the Old, Luther is very emphatic.* He held fast by the undoubted truth that "the twofold nature of the divine Word as law and gospel" corresponds to the historical process of salvation. The law of Moses, as such, has no applicability to Christians; even the observance of the Ten Commandments is obligatory simply because they give "the natural moral law which is nowhere else so well set forth and written down as by Moses." His language upon this point is sometimes coarse and offensive. "We will neither see nor hear of Moses," he declares, "for Moses was given only to the Jewish folk, and does not extend to us

* D. S. S., ii., p. 160 f.

heathens and Christians." "If any one brings up before you Moses with his laws, and will compel you to keep them, tell him, Go to the Jews with your Moses: I am no Jew; leave me unperplexed by Moses." The view of Melanchthon was, however, that law and gospel extend throughout the whole Bible, and are as inseparable as the two cherubim upon the ark. Zwingli held the same ideal conception of the law. But Calvin held both views in some sort. He regarded Old and New Testaments as alike constituting the Word of God; yet he taught that, for the rule of right living, nothing can be derived from Moses beyond the Decalogue. A spiritual unity of the truth of the two Testaments was asserted by all the reformers.

Regarding the question, whether the Bible is infallible, the views of Luther are highly inconsistent with each other, if we consider only the apparent meaning of his words. In one place he vehemently affirms that one letter of the Scripture is of more consequence than heaven and earth; and exclaims, "God forbid that there should be a single letter in Paul which the whole Church should not follow and keep." But he himself rejects as faulty and mistaken, not only certain passages of Scripture, but even entire books as respects their religious doctrine. He declares that he cannot make out that the book of Revelation is the product of the Holy Ghost, and affirms that any one may call him a "fool" who can make James and Paul square; while the epistle of the former is in his estimate a "right strawy" one. He also made light of Jude. He regarded Ecclesiastes as composed of several books which Sirach

found in the library of Egypt and put together; and said of the author of Ezra and Nehemiah that "he Estherizes and Mordecaizes in a wonderful fashion."

Irreconcilable contradictions in the historical and other particulars of the Bible seemed to Luther of little importance so long as there was no contradiction in the articles of faith. Zwingli admitted the existence of historical errors, but considered them designed by God in His plan of educating the people. The penetrating insight of Calvin was such as enabled him to see that the nature of the Old-Testament Scriptures is necessarily inferior and temporary because they were designed to train the world for the coming of Christ.

The falling into disrepute of the allegorical interpretation gave an opportunity for the greater exercise of a sober historical sense; at the same time it made more obvious the difficulty of admitting that historical and other discrepancies and errors exist in the Bible. For when pressed with this difficulty the ancient resort to spiritualizing and mystical meanings was taken away.

Thus did the earnest and strong spiritual movements of the Reformation express themselves with reference to the nature and origin of sacred Scripture. But we shall soon see how, under the influence of practical needs in the conflict which arose between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, the distinction between canonical writings and God's word was abandoned, and the views of the early reformers modified and hardened into the later dogmatic form. The truth is, that these

views, proclaimed as they at first were, in conflict with the Roman Catholic principle of tradition, contained, themselves, the elements of a yet fiercer, internal conflict. According to the Protestant position, *the Bible alone is authoritative and sufficient, concerning things necessary to salvation, both as respects faith and as respects morals.* But, according to a Roman Catholic authority (Bellarmine), and according to the decision of the Council of Trent, "the whole doctrine which is necessary, whether as respects faith or as respects morals, is *not* contained in the Scriptures." By the authority of Scripture the early reformers understood themselves to be affirming that the truth of the Gospel is authoritatively taught in Scripture. By the sufficiency of Scripture they understood that any believer, without the aid of church or clergy, may find enough of this truth clearly set forth in the Bible to ensure his salvation and safely to form thereby his Christian life. Such authority and sufficiency of the Word of God in Holy Scripture, Protestantism affirmed and Roman Catholicism denied.

Now, it is obvious that many very puzzling questions may be proposed to this essentially true doctrine of the early reformers. Who, for example, is to tell us what writings really belong to Holy Scripture, and what do not? Who, moreover, shall interpret the Bible authoritatively, and actually derive from it correct statements of doctrine and rules for the Christian life? Must every unlearned believer undertake this for himself? If so, what becomes of the Bible's actual authority, not to say its infallibility?

The careful student of the history of the Protestant Reformation will observe that both parties in this great controversy came finally to hold one common erroneous and mischievous view. Both adopted the assumption that God *must* have left some "infallible," that is errorless, guide for the Christian, to which he may resort for detailed and explicit instruction as to what is true for him to think and right for him to do. The extreme Protestant position was at last even more unreasonable and untenable than the Roman Catholic position had been. But the Protestant position had this immeasurable advantage: that it was capable of being abandoned without damage to the essential doctrine or life of Protestantism.

It is not necessary to trace in detail the process by which the "*post*-Reformation" view of the origin and nature of the Bible was developed. It is enough to say that once more in the history of the Christian Church the prevalent dogma was hardened so as to serve as an effective weapon in a conflict with those she regarded as her enemies. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that this dogmatic view of the Bible, though current among Protestant theologians, was wholly undisputed. Doubts, grumblings, and denials are to be found in every Christian land and in every sect of Protestantism. Prevalent as it was, the dogma did not secure acceptance in any Protestant symbols of note, with one or two comparatively unimportant exceptions.

Meantime some Christian scholars were engaged in the study of the Bible; they were learning the facts, and were unwilling to refuse to recognize the meaning

of the facts, for the sake of having a good fighting weapon in the shape of a dogma of biblical infallibility. Gradually at first, and then more rapidly, point after point this *post*-Reformation dogma was forced to give way.

In their conflict with Roman Catholicism on the one hand, and with unbelief on the other hand, the Protestant theologians, from about 1600 A.D. to 1750 A.D., were not content with the view of the Bible taken by the early and great reformers. These theologians regarded the absolute infallibility and equal inspiration of all parts of the Bible as a necessary assumption of faith. They held that the belief and life of the Christian are related to a certain set of writings in such a way that, if a single error of any kind whatever—even the slightest grammatical blemish—were admitted to exist in these writings, this belief would totter to its fall, this life would surely go entirely astray.

The entire method of approach to the inquiry, What is the Bible? was thus cut off from all connection with fact or experience touching God's ways of dealing with men in other matters. No safe answer to the inquiry could then be devised on the basis of an examination into the facts of the Bible, or even of a free and fair examination into the claims of the Bible. Nor could this particular collection of writings be regarded as related in any intelligible manner to other writings of prophetic and apostolic men. For the so-called canonical books, and they alone, were to be considered, without the exception of a single verse or word, as put into the minds of the writers—ready-made, as it were. And if the in

quiry were raised, "How do we know that such is the origin and true nature of the Bible?" the only answer to be given was, "It is a necessary assumption of faith."

The foregoing description applies to the most extreme form of the *post*-Reformation opinion regarding the nature of the biblical writings. In some particulars certain of its advocates showed more or less disposition to soften this dogma, or occasionally to depart from it. But in all essential characteristics the dogma was and remained, until overthrown, the same as described above. It so remained, we have said, until *overthrown*, for although marks of its influence still abound everywhere, as a compacted opinion it is now defended by no biblical scholars, and by few theologians whose judgments are entitled to respect.

The *post*-Reformation dogma made the Bible include —in the case of every book, passage, word, and letter— the three following elements:* First. An *impulse to write.* This impulse was invariably given in the form of a divine command. All the canonical books must come from God moving and impelling the sacred writers to their work. Any other impulses, such as the occasion to be met by a letter or prophecy, were of secondary importance, and could not, of themselves, constitute the call to write.

Second. *Suggestion of subject-matter* by the Holy Ghost was necessary to the inspiration of every portion of the Bible. All things contained in Scripture—even the facts immediately known to the writers in the natural way, or acquirable from others by ordinary meth-

* D. S. S., ii., p. 209.

ods—were consigned to letters only through infallible, divine direction, and by special suggestion, inspiration, and dictation of the Holy Ghost. If it were admitted that the contents of a single verse were produced otherwise—for example, the request of Paul to bring his cloak, or the statement that "Timna was a concubine"—it would be easy for Satan to extend this omission to a whole chapter or book, and so destroy the entire authority of Scripture.

But especially was *suggestion of the words* held to be necessary to the inspiration of the Bible. The identical words, all and in particular, were supplied and dictated to the writers by the Holy Ghost. Verbal and grammatical errors as well as all inelegancies of style, must be denied as unworthy of the Divine Spirit, who is throughout the primary author of the Bible. To so great lengths was a section of the Christian Church carried in its blind fear that God could not, as an ever-living and indwelling Spirit, keep His Church from fatal error in doctrine, or from swerving from the right path in life!

Such a theory as has just been described could not fail to influence greatly, and in a detrimental way, the interpretation and practical uses of sacred Scripture. Substantially the same thing happened again which had already happened in the earlier centuries of the history of the Church. The theologians who invented this dogma about the Bible sought to determine, in accordance with the dogma, precisely what truths every reader should find taught in the Bible. They were not willing to leave the question,

What is the Bible? to the researches of Christian scholars, who should thus give to it a better and better answer as increased acquaintance was gained with the facts. They even undertook to instruct the unlearned believer that no discrimination must be made, with respect to their moral fallibility, between the doctrine of Christ in the New Testament and things in the Old Testament repugnant to his Christian consciousness.

Especially strong and dominating was the tendency among those who held this dogma to regard the entire Bible as a kind of theological parade-ground for proof-texts. A large portion of all its books thus became pre-empted, as it were, and appropriated for the defense of the system of dogmatic statements which the theology of the time deemed orthodox. It was the *number* of such proof-texts which was chiefly regarded. The words of the Bible were not weighed and valued according to the source from which they came—whether from Christ or from Paul, from Solomon or the author of Chronicles or of Ezra. All passages were to be regarded as alike weighty in arguing any doctrine or opinion which they seemed to maintain.

But distrust and remonstrance existed even during the century and a half of the prevalence of the *post*-Reformation view of the Bible. Some of this opposition came from scholars who through the progress of a revived interest in ancient literature and its interpretation had learned how to study the Bible in the original languages, and with the use of the few grammatical and historical helps then existing. It was, from the very nature of the case, the *text* of the Bible with reference

to which the results of identifying the Word of God with the canonical writings had reached their most ex travagant dimensions. Accordingly the growing knowledge of the origin and condition of the biblical text became, from the first, a high and impassable tripping stone for the prevalent doctrine of biblical infallibility.

A work which appeared in Paris in 1633, by John Morinus, attempted to show how "the original Hebrew text has been so corrupted that it cannot serve as the source and norm of Scripture." * Another work, finished about the same time, but not published till later (1650, by Cappellus), laid down certain rules for the correction of the Hebrew text, while insisting that none of the variations in it affect the important things of faith and conduct. The impossibility of establishing an infallible text of the Bible became more clearly seen as the view, put forth and defended in the previous century by a German Jew (1538, by Elias Levita), was demonstrated, viz.: that the current Hebrew vowels belong to a time much later than that of the original authors. To every statement of facts the theologians replied with vehement denial and charges of heresy. The inspiration even of the Hebrew vowel-points was considered by them as a necessity of religious faith. It was asserted by some theorists that the origin of these written signs was as old as Adam. "It is impious and profane audacity," says that bitter dogmatist Calovius, "to change a single point in the Word of God, and to substitute a smooth breathing for a rough one, or a rough for a smooth." This same theologian is said to

* D. S. S., ii., p. 187.

have uttered the daily prayer: "Fill me, O God, with a hatred of heretics." But in spite of all this, as we might expect, the truth of the facts kept winning its way.

It had been an accepted principle with the early reformers that an interpreter of the Bible must have a knowledge of the languages in which it was written. But the study of Hebrew by means of grammatical and philological helps is incompatible with the view that Hebrew is a divine language with its very dots and vowel-points inspired and full of religious secrets. Scholars, therefore, began to take the position that this language is genuinely human and analogous to other Semitic languages. The science now called "higher criticism," or Biblical Introduction, began to be formed; and the historical conditions under which the biblical writings originated, and by which they were shaped, were more taken into account.

Natural science also began to press its inquiries upon the statements of the Bible. As the claims of science to possess the truth about the phenomena and laws of nature grew bolder and scientific information increased in extent, the *post*-Reformation theory either totally rejected those claims and scouted this information, or else resorted to a kind of weak rationalizing. Such rationalizing resulted, in turn, in a defense of Scripture by naturalistic explanations wholly foreign, as every candid reader can see, to the thought of the writers of Scripture themselves. This habit of rationalizing is by no means extinct even now. Thus we have recently seen the raining of fire from heaven upon the wicked cities of the plain *defended* as consisting of the firing and

explosion of petroleum wells in the vicinity of those cities.

The theory of an infallible "letter" also provoked the opposition of certain sects of enthusiasts and mystics, such as the Pietists in Germany and the Quakers in England. Some of these sects were therefore moved to exaggerate greatly the distinction between the Word of God and the written Bible,—a distinction which the early reformers recognized, but which the *post*-Reformation theory considered extremely heretical. Some even called the orthodox theologians "slaves of the letter." Others, more moderate, diligently studied the Bible with a view to find how all its parts, being spiritually understood, might be used for edification. Pietism in Germany thus produced a great glow of critical zeal in the interpretation of the Bible.

English Deism, of course, set itself against the view of the Bible taken by the dogmatic theology of the period. Its attitude was essentially destructive. It tended to regard the Hebrew religion as only one among many; and some of its leaders (like Morgan and Chubb) utterly discredited both the supernatural and the moral basis of the Old Testament as well as the supernatural basis of the New.

But nowhere else in all this time, probably, do we find individual examples of opinion at once so faithful to the spirit of biblical Christianity, and also so fair and hospitable toward the facts, as among the Dissenters in England. The pious and learned Richard Baxter, whose memory may well be cherished by English-speaking Christians to-day, is notable among these examples.

Baxter rejected the view that all parts of the Bible are alike infallible and important; some parts, he held, may be compared to the nails and the hair in the human bodily organism. Only Christ is infallible; the apostles were not inspired so as to be infallible in matters not pertaining to their mission of promulgating the Gospel as Christ himself had taught it. The Old Testament originated in a lower form of revelation. Men are not to be tempted to accept or reject as the very word of God what they cannot in good reason or good conscience hold to be true. The *truth* of Scripture is the very Word of God.

Nor did Baxter appear to think that his opinions must be concealed from unlearned Christians lest they might be turned from their faith by hearing them expressed. On the contrary, he appeared to think that the faith of the unlearned will be strengthened by teaching them to distinguish between the essential object of faith and theological dogmas as to the nature and origin of the writings which present this object. For in his work called "Catechising of Families, or a Teacher of Householders," among other similar truths, we find the following: "And here I must tell you a great and needful truth which, ignorant Christians fearing to confess, by overdoing, tempt men to infidelity. The Scripture is like a man's body, where some parts are but for the preservation of the rest, and may be maimed without death; the sense is the soul of Scripture, and the letter but the body or vehicle. The doctrine of the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Decalogue, and baptism and Lord's Supper, is the vital part and Christianity itself.

The Old-Testament letter (written, as we have it, about Ezra's time,) is that vehicle which is as imperfect as the revelation of those times was, ... so that he that doubts of the truth f some words of the Old Testament, or of some small circumstantials in the New, hath no reason, therefore, to doubt of that Christian religion of which these writings are but the vehicle or body, sufficient to ascertain us of the truth of the history and doctrine."* Would not far fewer men have been "tempted to infidelity," if Richard Baxter's views and method of instruction had been more widely followed in the pulpit and in the family?

Philip Doddridge also did not consider that the inspiration of the biblical books excluded all errors, unless it were of the kind called "plenary"; and he did not even consider that all the New Testament was written under this "plenary" inspiration. Inspiration is to be assumed to be plenary in the case of the apostles; but in their case only when there is no evidence to the contrary. Scattered notices and hints occurring in the writings of various Puritan authors, both in England and in America—especially after the beginning of the seventeenth century—show the ferment of thought and the result of increasing biblical study in undermining the untenable positions of the *post*-Reformation dogma. These Puritan writers also exhibit a marked tendency to exalt the Christian reason and conscience—that instrument of all well-founded faith in God and Christ which is in these days dreaded and de-

*D. S. S., ii., p. 212 f.

cried by some under the term, "the Christian consciousness"—to the position of interpreter of the Bible. Indeed, it can scarcely be denied that some of these writers almost co-ordinate this Christian reason with the Bible as a source of divine truth, in place of either the *consensus* of the early Church or the "analogy of faith" of the later Reformation theology.

It was not, however, until about the year 1750 A.D. and afterward, that the theory which we have called the "*post*-Reformation," began more obviously to go to pieces under the blows dealt it by an advancing science of biblical study.

A shallow, foaming tide of rationalism had set in and spread itself over England and the Continent. This tide those who had most strenuously maintained the supernatural origin and character of biblical religion, found themselves powerless to resist; and many theologians really succumbed to it by falling in with its most essential but most vicious tendencies. Then the work of restoring an ethical and spiritual character to biblical religion was undertaken afresh. In accomplishing this work it became necessary to have a more complete and harmonious union of effort on the part of all those who owned a real allegiance to such ethical and spiritual character. Quibbles about the infallibility of the minutiæ of the text or of the geographical, geological, and historical statements of the Bible, might well seem less important as the greater necessity pressed upon all.

It finally became settled beyond dispute that the Hebrew in which the Old-Testament writings have come down to us has not been preserved from manifold cor

ruptions, either by supernatural control or by extraordinary providential care through the pious Jews of ancient time. But it also became clear that the "received Hebrew text," so-called, is, on the whole, more accurate, and has a higher value than the text of any of the other ancient versions of the Old Testament. Now, the desire to purify the text of sacred Scripture is a legitimate result of the essential idea of Protestantism; but the attempt to repress and restrict the efforts arising from this desire is an equally legitimate result of the *post*-Reformation theory of inspiration. It was, therefore, natural and inevitable for the theory of infallible verbal inspiration that it should seize upon the so-called "received text" of the New Testament and make a stand to defend it against further attempts at improvement. But that has happened in the case of the text of the New Testament which has happened in the case of the Old. The right of biblical study to purify the text has been recognized.

The progress of research into the real nature of the Hebrew and Greek texts of sacred Scripture could not fail to discredit the *post*-Reformation theory of inspiration; for textual criticism made it obvious that infallibility and certainty in no respect belong to any text *recoverable* by us. The following question is then inevitable: If God did not intend to preserve a perfectly certain and errorless verbal form of Holy Scripture for the use of His Church, why should He create such a form at the first? Why should the Holy Spirit dictate an exact set of words in which to state facts of history or religious opinions and tenets, when careless copy-

ists and dim-eyed scribes and officious meddlers, and the gnawing tooth of time and the power of human infirmities, were all to be allowed at once and through all the centuries to perform upon these words their work of alteration and corruption? Faith will totter, the theory declares, if we do not assume that the original biblical text *was* infallible; but faith does not totter, when we find that the biblical text we have *is* not infallible.

Meanwhile, the progress of biblical study was rapidly undermining the same dogma of biblical infallibility in other ways. The making of grammars and lexicons of the Old- and New-Testament languages, and the use of these helps in the study of the sacred writings, brought to light all the various linguistic peculiarities of the inspired authors. It became certain that these authors were not mere "penmen" or "amanuenses," or "notaries" of the Holy Ghost; that they have not only individual peculiarities of style, but also all the obscurities and frailties which everywhere cling to human speech.

The historical study of the canonical books, and the development of what is known as the "higher criticism," served also to show the artificial and untenable character of the prevalent theory. The individual books of the Bible were subjected to the methods which are employed to determine the authorship of other ancient writings. The effort was made to regard these books in the light of the time at which, and the circumstances amidst which, they severally originated. It is this, indeed, which the so-called "higher" criticism avowedly aims to accomplish. At the same time the

history of the formation of the Canon became more thoroughly understood. The result of all this historical study was clearly to show that the writings of Holy Scripture were composed and brought together into one book in a manner quite irreconcilable with the *post*-Reformation theory.

The result of more than a century of inquiry into the authorship of the separate writings of sacred Scripture has shown that a number of them have undoubtedly been ascribed by ancient usage to the wrong persons. We have seen that the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, in its present form, was known by Richard Baxter. "What difference does it make," asked Luther in his Table-Talk, "if Moses did not himself write the Pentateuch?" To this question the answer has been correctly given by modern scholarship: It makes no difference with the faith of the Christian, or with his use of the Bible as an authoritative source for things necessary to salvation, both as respects faith and morals. It does, however, make an important and essential difference with the *post*-Reformation view of the origin and nature of the Bible. The effect of scholarly opinion as to the impossibility or improbability of connecting various other books of the Bible—Isaiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Canticles—with the persons whose names tradition has selected as their authors, has been in the same direction.

The historical study of the formation of the Canon has also called attention to the hesitating way in which the Jewish Church came to establish its circuit of acknowledged sacred literature. More influential, per

haps, has been the growing knowledge of the fact that certain books, which are now regarded as integral parts of the Bible, were admitted to the Canon but doubtfully, and were at first and for a long time regarded as belonging decidedly in an inferior rank.

The growth of literary sense and literary criticism has also not been without considerable influence upon the fate of the *post*-Reformation theory. It was Semler and Herder who did most at the beginning of the present century to develop regard for the Bible as literature which should be studied and appreciated from the literary point of view. Both of these scholars, as well as all others who afterward studied it largely from the same point of view, rejected the theory of its infallible and verbal inspiration. Now, although neither Christian theology nor Christian experience has accepted the view that the writings of Holy Scripture are *merely* literature, the consideration of them in their literary aspect, and from the literary point of standing, has without doubt greatly modified the accepted doctrine of their origin and nature.

The spread of the methods and spirit of modern physical science, and its greater recent triumphs, have also exercised no little influence upon the opinion prevalent as to the inspiration of the Bible. It is no longer possible to demonstrate that the earth does not move around the sun by simply appealing to the narrative of the miracle in Joshua; or to disprove the conclusions of geology as to the antiquity of the earth, and the slow process of its formation, by pointing out that Moses teaches the creation of all things in six days

of twenty-four hours. Indeed, the current theological argument has become reversed in a way most astonishing when viewed in the light of the *post*-Reformation theory. This theory held that geology *cannot* be right if, in the slightest particular, it contradicts the infallible dictation of the Holy Spirit to Moses. But the modern defense of Scripture admits without a question that geology *is* right, and then tries to show how the words of Genesis may possibly be understood so as to accord with the undoubted conclusions of physical science. The complete reversal of stand-point shows a marked change in current opinion as to the true and defensible doctrine of sacred Scripture.

A largely increased knowledge of the history and literature of the ancient nations contemporaneous with the times when the biblical writings arose, has operated greatly to modify the opinions of men in respect to the nature of these writings. The records of the peoples which surrounded the Jews, and with which they had most frequent intercourse, have, in modern times, been zealously explored. Many traditions of the earliest things of the earth and of humanity—traditions of the Creation, of the Fall, of the Flood, of the origin and early growth of civilization—have now been brought to light. The remarkable similarity of some of these traditions to the narratives in the early chapters of Genesis has suggested a common origin for both. Syria, Assyria, and Egypt, as well as ancient Palestine itself, have yielded up some of their hitherto concealed treasures of ancient story. The general impression made by these discoveries has been that of the trustworthiness, in the

main, of the biblical historical books; it has not been such, however, as to confirm that dogmatic assumption of biblical infallibility upon which the *post*-Reformation theory rested.

New views of biblical religion and a change of predominating interest and of the balance of power, so to speak, among its doctrines, have also greatly modified the opinions of Christian scholars and theologians concerning the origin and nature of the Bible. The use of the Bible for the teaching and practical guidance of Christians and for the dissemination of the truth of the Gospel, has vastly increased. At the same time the weight of emphasis has been slipping off from the dogma of its inspiration. As a book of the Spirit, it has lost none of its ancient power; it will never lose this power as long as the Spirit who dwells with believers speaks through the Book to their reason and conscience, and thus inspires them to new spiritual life. But it is no longer held by the enlightened scholar or theologian that faith will totter if mistakes or faulty opinions are anywhere discernible in the Bible. It is not true, as the *post*-Reformation dogma disloyally asserted—that Satan can enter into Holy Scripture and ravage it utterly, through the gap of a single historical error.

Under such influences as those just mentioned, the *post*-Reformation theory has tottered and fallen—a ruin complete so far as its own compacted and well-cemented structure is concerned. But no equally elaborate and self-consistent doctrine of sacred Scripture has arisen to take its place. Certain impressions which entered into the theory—impressions both true and false—are still

profoundly influential; they largely determine that view of his Bible and its right uses which guides the unlearned Christian of to-day. But what are the lessons of the facts of history? How shall we shape our answer to the question, What is the Bible? in view of the opinions held by the Church of Christ in all the centuries of its experience with the Bible? We reply with the following summary of conclusions.

1. No elaborate doctrine of the nature of sacred Scripture has yet been constructed and adopted by the Christian Church at large. This state of the case is, in part, due to the character of the question, in answer to which any such doctrine would have to be constructed. The question, What is the Bible? is essentially a question of facts; but the facts require for their exploration the use of methods and resources which have only comparatively recently been within the reach of Christian scholars

2. History shows that certain untenable opinions, foreign to the essence of biblical religion and uncongenial to the spirit of true Christianity, have repeatedly forced their way into the doctrinal views of the Church regarding the Bible. The theory of the composition of inspired writings in a condition of prophetic ecstasy, the allegorical interpretation of the biblical histories and of its moral maxims and wise sayings, the theory of a special infallible inspiration operative within the minds of a select few and directed toward the production of sacred writings only, the theory of a divine suggestion of all the particular contents and individual words of these writings, the belief that faith is dependent upon the

errorless nature of those records of the process of revelation which discloses to us the true object of faith,—all these are opinions of such untenable or foreign character. No teaching of history is more important than this legitimate *negative* conclusion; none of these opinions can be enforced in the name of the Holy Church catholic.

3. Nor can it be said that the Christian Church has even agreed to identify, throughout, the circuit of canonical writings and the "Word of God." In any legitimate meaning of the terms, *it is not truly catholic doctrine that the "Bible is the word of God."* To put the proclamation of the Gospel and the apostolic teaching of the person, mission, and work of Jesus Christ upon a par with the Song of Solomon, with the traditions of the first chapters of Genesis, with the worldly-wise maxims of Proverbs, or with the priestly minutiæ and genealogizings of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles as being alike the "Word of God," is certainly not required in fidelity to the consent of the body of Christian witnesses. Such complete dogmatic identification of the Bible and the Word of God has never been attempted except by the so-called *post*-Reformation theory of biblical inspiration. It is contrary to the views held by the ancient Church regarding the nature of extra-canonical books, regarding the nature of some of the canonical books as inferior to others, and so unfit to be used for the establishment of doctrine, regarding the nature of the apostolic witness, and regarding the nature of the inspiration of the Church. It is contrary not only to the expressed opinio s of some of the early and

great reformers, but also to the principles upon which the Reformation movement was based. That it is directly contrary to the tendencies of that modern biblical study under which the *post*-Reformation theory has itself broken into fragments, is beyond reasonable question.

4. An exceedingly unstable condition of opinion in answer to the question, What is the Bible? no doubt still exists. A great variety of views upon various points prevails among the community of most intelligent and pious Christian scholars. This is the inevitable outcome of the past course of the history of this doctrine. But such variety of views does not signify either that the Christian Church has maintained no consistent doctrine touching any of the qualities and offices of the Bible, or that the attempt to form a tenable theory of the nature and origin of sacred Scripture cannot succeed at the present time. Some things the body of Christian students of the biblical writings, learned and unlearned, have in all times agreed upon as true. A brief statement of these matters of common agreement will therefore fitly terminate this branch of our inquiry.

5. The Christian Church has always regarded it as the most priceless and indispensable office of sacred Scripture to be a witness to the person, doctrine, and work of Christ. So far as the Old Testament is concerned, the precise nature of this witness has been much disputed. Sometimes it has been found to consist, in part, in mystical meanings to the scarlet thread of Rahab, or to the number of Abraham's servants. The more en-

lightened mind of to-day sees that it consists in the historical preparation for His coming, and in the historical development which the Divine Spirit secured to that idea of God as the Redeemer of men which Christ fulfilled. The New Testament has always been regarded as containing the authentic and authoritative witness of the apostles to Christ's person, doctrine, and work. In spite of all the assaults of modern infidelity against the idea of a self-revelation of God as the Redeemer of man, and in spite of all the assaults of modern hostile criticism against the genuineness and credibility of the New-Testament writings, the view of the Church catholic remains unchanged.

6. Closely connected with the foregoing view of the nature of the Bible, is that which regards it as containing an authentic record of a special divine revelation. It is this work of the Holy Spirit, in gradually making God known to men as their Father and Redeemer, which has given us the Bible. The Bible is the authentic record of this revelation. By the biblical writings we know that God has revealed Himself to man in a special manner; we know also what He has revealed Himself as being and doing for them in their great need and sinfulness; we further know the main stages and the outlines of the progress of this revelation; and we know *Him* as the Redeemer in Jesus Christ. But, above all, is it true that Holy Scripture has always been regarded by the Christian Church as giving an authentic record of her own founding by Christ, through the work of the apostles and apostolic men, upon faith in Him as God's Son and our Saviour.

7. It follows, then, that the Bible has always been regarded as an authentic and authoritative source of Christian doctrine. What is biblical religion, and what the biblical standard of right living as respects both God and man? More especially: what is true Christianity, and what should a Christian believe and do that he may be faithful to the divine standard? The trustworthy and authoritative answer to these questions is to be obtained from the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments. This answer is not found in these writings in the form of a symbolic statement or system of theological tenets; it must be *obtained* from them. Nor can it be obtained by any one, learned or unlearned, without the use of his enlightened reason and conscience; or with a completeness and certainty which are independent of painstaking research and thought. Moreover, the Protestant doctrine of sacred Scripture insists upon the answer which comes to these questions from the Bible as being *alone* fully trustworthy and authoritative; in this regard, then, it differs from the view taken of sacred Scripture by the Roman-Catholic Church.

8. Still further, the conviction of the profitableness of the biblical writings for training and strengthening the religious life, and for the uses of Christian worship by the individual, and in the family and public assembly, may be said to be a matter common to the different ages and portions of the Christian Church. It is true, however, that for centuries, and in considerable portions of the Church, this profit from the Bible has been only very indirectly and meagrely secured. Preaching

exhortation, and paraphrase have always very largely, and sometimes almost exclusively, taken the place of the believer's immediate intercourse with the Spirit through sacred Scripture.

9. Finally, it is one permanent element of the view taken of the Bible by the Christian Church, that its constitution is due to a movement of divine spiritual life, which has acted in a quickening and organizing way within the body of believers. This is the essential thing in every doctrine of the *inspiration* of the Bible. The spirit which produced the sacred writings is the same Holy Spirit which enlightens the mind of the believing reader of these writings, and thus spirit answers to spirit as he reads. At no time, except during the dominance of the *post*-Reformation dogma over the greater part of Protestantism, has the "inspiration" of the authors of sacred Scripture been regarded as specifically different in kind from that possessed by other believers, or as given to them solely for the purpose of fitting them to compose an infallible Bible.

CHAPTER III.

THE VIEWS OF THE BIBLICAL WRITERS.

That the writings of the New Testament furnish us with no doctrine regarding the origin and nature of the Bible, follows necessarily from the fact that the last of these writings was finished some time before the canon, as a whole, was settled. On the contrary, the canon of the Old Testament was essentially fixed at the time when the New-Testament writings arose. We can therefore only inquire what view some of the New-Testament writers took of sacred Scripture—its origin and nature—such Scripture being exemplified in the canonical books of the Hebrew Bible. As Christians we shall, of course, attach supreme importance to the teachings of Christ and the apostles.

The view which the Christian Church takes of the person of our Lord, defines our attitude toward Him as a teacher upon the particular doctrine now under consideration. His word is authoritative and infallible regarding all the truths of salvation. But we cannot safely overlook one very important caution.

We should be very careful not hastily to commit the authority of Christ to trivialities now in dispute among biblical critics and commentators. Because He refers to Jonah, for example, without apparently questioning the historical nature of the narrative of the transactions of this prophet, it does not follow that His authority

may be pledged to one of several theories as to the nature of the book in which the narrative occurs. Because, again, He refers to a certain prophetic declaration as "fulfilled in Himself," it does not follow that His authority may be pledged to one among several views as to the *way in which* the declaration was understood by the prophet who made it, or the way in which it was fulfilled by Himself as Messiah.

There can be no doubt that our Lord looked upon the canonical Hebrew Scriptures as *sacred.** He expresses this view by His frequent use of the titles which carry the idea of sacredness with them, and also by His whole attitude toward those Scriptures. They are regarded by Him as *the* (pre-eminently sacred) "Scriptures" (see John v. 39, x. 35; Matt. xxvi. 54), the "Scriptures of the prophets" (Matt. xxvi. 56). Moreover, He apparently never makes any reference, as do some of the fathers of the ancient Church, to items of history or doctrine in Jewish books outside of the canon.

But in what way did Christ regard the Old Testament as pre-eminently sacred Scripture? We find in His teachings no discussion of the nature of inspiration or revelation, and few hints which can properly be used by us to throw light on the discussion of these subjects as now current among us. But He constantly taught that it was His mission to fulfil or "accomplish" certain legal and prophetic contents of the ancient sacred writings. All that is most important in Christ's view of the origin and nature of Scripture is, therefore, gained when we answer the inquiry: In what sense

* D. S. S., i., pp. 34 ff.

did He consider it His mission to accomplish the "law and the prophets"?

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 17 ff.), we are told that Christ did not come to destroy, but to fulfil the ancient sacred Scriptures; and not a jot or a tittle is to pass away from them, "till all things be accomplished." Now, it is true, we cannot regard Him as making here the distinction, so familiar to us, between the ceremonial and civil law, on the one hand, and the moral law on the other hand. But He certainly does distinguish between that ideal and moral truth which is given in the letter of the Old Testament, and which He is going to fulfil, and the jot and tittle of the letter which will pass away after it is all accomplished. Nothing could be farther removed than this from the rabbinical devotion to the minutiæ of the letter, and from all rabbinizing theories of verbal or mechanical inspiration.

The same attitude toward the Old Testament, as that taken in the Sermon on the Mount, is maintained by our Lord in all His subsequent discourses. He elsewhere (Matt. xi. 13) teaches that "the prophets and the law" (the Old-Testament Scriptures generally) *are* going to pass away; for they are only *until* John. A higher order is to succeed them. These two passages in Matthew, taken together, plainly imply that the entire economy of the Old Testament, as respects the authority and binding nature of its form, will pass away, while not an item of its moral and spiritual reality will fail of fulfilment in Christ.*

* See D. S. S., i., p. 40 f.

Repeatedly does our Lord make clear for us the truth that it is the ideal and higher moral meaning of the Old Testament which gives to the book its value for Christians, and which it is His mission to fulfil. This same doctrine of God and righteousness, the ancient prophets tried in vain to teach the Jewish nation (Matt. xxiii. 34–39); the commandments of the Hebrew Scriptures are all summed up, as respects their ideal contents, in love to God and man (Mark xii. 28–31). Therefore Jesus does not hesitate to speak of a punctilious keeping of the Levitical law of tithes as of little account compared with that justice, mercy, and humility before God, which the more spiritual of the prophets enjoined. So, too, when He and His disciples were accused of breaking the commandments as respecting the Sabbath (in the eyes of the Jews one of the most fundamental and holy of the entire ten), He does not justify Himself by pointing out that the rabbinical interpretation of this law was wrong and forced: He rather points out that Christianity introduces a new code to man: He falls back upon unchanging moral and religious principles as authoritatively recognized and taught by Himself, the founder of Christianity. He deals in a similar way with the Mosaic law of divorce (see Mark x. 2–12), and the Levirate law of marriage. They are ancient laws of sacred Scripture, but have only an imperfect morality and a temporary force.

The regulations of the law touching ceremonial washings and forbidding certain foods (regulations so dear and sacred from the priestly and Levitical point of view) Jesus regarded lightly; He even seems to take a hos-

tile position toward the ceremonial laws of fasting (see Matt. ix. 14–17, and parallel passages). All observances of legal sort are of little worth, in his estimate, compared with principles of righteous conduct.

It seems, therefore, that Christ regarded the law of Moses as containing two kinds of elements which are widely different with respect to their character and bearing upon the thought and life of His disciples; in it there exists real and abiding divine truth, but it also contains enactments which were concessions to the low morality of the men of its time, or were designed to discipline them in ceremonial and external observances. The shock which this manner of speaking of the law and its scriptures must have given to the Jewish opinion of that day, can scarcely be imagined by us, who are so familiar with the distinction between what is binding and what not in the legal portions of the Old-Testament writings. For, the Jews regarded the "Law" as pre-eminently inspired and sacred in every jot of it.

Further, it is repeatedly implied in the words of Christ that Moses was a chosen medium for revealing the divine thought and will to Israel; but no doctrine of Moses' inspiration as a writer of sacred Scriptures is anywhere taught or even suggested. Nor is it a valid argument from Christ's use of the current phrase, "the book of Moses," that He regarded this lawgiver as the author of the entire Pentateuch in its present form.

That Christ believed in the inspiration of the Hebrew prophets, and in the reality of their predictions with reference to Himself as the Messiah, there can be no

doubt at all. Indeed, it was the existence of these inspired predictions and anticipations, though often in dim and shadowy lines, within the ancient Scriptures, to which His own work of "fulfilling" was designed to correspond.

The questions as to the more precise way in which Christ understood the Messianic prophecies of the sacred Hebrew Scriptures to refer to Himself—as to the clearness of the ancient prophetic vision of Messiah for which He furnished the reality, and as to just how far into details He wished it to be expected that His own fulfilment of prophecy should go—all these questions it is difficult to answer by interpreting His teachings with a scholarly candor. It does not appear, however, that He considered it necessary for an ancient prophecy to have been *primarily written of Himself* (much less to have been understood by its writer as referring to any one precisely like Jesus), in order that such prophecy might be *fulfilled in Himself*. He taught that everything which the ancient inspired seers of the nation had said concerning the redemption of the people by the servant of Jehovah—concerning the character and work, the reign, sufferings, death, and final triumph of the Lord's Redeemer for the nation—was now to be completely fulfilled.

If, then, some curious inquirer had questioned Jesus in regard to the prophetic declaration, "He was led as the sheep to the slaughter," etc., as the eunuch questioned Philip: "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?" it is not at all likely that the great teacher would have

thought it best to debate the question whether the reference to Himself was a primary or only a typical reference. One rule suffices for all such passages: "*This which is written must be fulfilled* IN ME"; "*for that* WHICH CONCERNETH ME *hath fulfilment*" (see Luke xxii. 37).

This "typical" view of the fulfilment of all the ancient prophetic Scriptures by Himself, Christ seems to maintain in all of His teachings. He is "He that cometh"; He is the "rejected stone" made head of the corner; He is the good shepherd "smitten" and "pierced" and scornfully appraised at the price of a slave. Abraham rejoiced to see his day; because that patriarch may be represented as still connected by interest and hope with the people sprung from his loins, whom Messiah is to redeem and multiply in a spiritual way. He is the one whom David in Psalm cx., being in the Spirit, called Lord, and exalted to a seat on the right hand of Jehovah.

It appears, then, that our Lord, unlike the writers of the Old-Testament Apocrypha and their successors, the rabbis of His day, regarded the prophetic contents of the Hebrew Bible more highly than its legal contents. Moses is no longer put forward as the one unapproachable prophet, whose Scripture would be degraded if it were treated as not superior to the other kinds of Scripture, by being laid, for example, underneath a manuscript roll of the later Isaiah. Yet there is not a trace in our Lord's utterances of what has been called "typological concupiscence" in the interpretation of prophecy. He seems content simply to repeat, from

varying points of view, the principle: "To me, as the Messiah of God, all these ancient prophetic expressions and predictions point forward with their higher meaning; in me they all have their ideal significance met and fully recognized."

The view which Christ held of the historical narratives of the Hebrew Scriptures appears to agree with His view of their prophetic contents. The deeper meaning of the history of Israel is made clear only when it is considered as preparatory for, and prophetic of, the founding of Messiah's kingdom. To commit the word of our Lord to the infallibility of historical details, or to any theory of the origin, authorship, or date of any book, or to any particular view as to the species of literary composition to which any book belongs, is both unwarrantable and dangerous to faith. This remark applies in a perfectly conclusive way to what He says of Himself (Matt. xii. 39–41) with reference to the prophecy of Jonah. It is only very indefinitely and figuratively that Jesus here compares His stay, for the same time, in the heart of the earth, and the prophet's stay in the belly of the sea-monster.* Only thus indefinitely and figuratively, indeed, could He speak at all of Himself as remaining after death "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,"—whether we understand the phrase "heart of the earth" to refer to the grave or to Hades. Little can be claimed more than this: the well-known story of Jonah serving as a sign to Nineveh gave the form to His own obscure ref-

* D. S. S., i., p. 65 f.

erence to His resurrection as a sign to the sinners of His own time.

Biblical students may, therefore, without the slightest suspicion of disloyalty to our Lord, investigate the character and authenticity of the ancient Hebrew book of Jonah. Such investigation tends to confirm the impression which a cursory examination of the narrative excites. A narrative in which a man is represented as composing a poetical prayer, surrounded with water, his head bound with seaweed, and drifting with marine currents, while inside a monster of the sea, was surely never intended by its author to be understood as literal history. The book of Jonah was written as an allegory.

Will it be claimed, then, that Christ could not properly refer to an *allegorical* book or passage of the Old Testament, when speaking in the midst of a people whose daily speech dealt in allegory; or that He could not do this without giving full notice of His opinion as to the nature of such book or passage—lest, as we will assume, some modern commentator or preacher might be led astray in judgment through mistaken zeal for his Master?

An uncritical use of Old-Testament narrative—a use which places the emphasis simply upon the moral and religious truth involved in the narrative—characterizes all the discourses of Jesus. Historical details are never dwelt upon by Him, after the fashion of the rabbinical learning or of the mystical exegesis, as though they were in themselves of great importance When speaking of the Flood (Matt. xxiv. 37 f., and Luke xvii. 27), He even seems to follow a tradition

which differs from that recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures; * so, too in speaking of the drought in the days of Elijah (Luke iv. 25–27), Jesus apparently follows a divergent Jewish tradition which lengthened its period to three years and six months.

In general, it may be said that our Lord authenticates the history of the Old Testament as containing important moral and religious truth regarding God's method of dealing with men, and especially regarding the nature of His own mission and kingdom. Certain occurrences in this history were plainly looked upon by Him as typical of the transactions which gave such immeasurable significance to His own history—for example, the erection of the serpent on the pole by Moses. But there is absolutely no sufficient warrant for committing the authority of the infallible teacher to the details of Old-Testament history, or to any theory of the inspiration of the writers of such history; while the very free and almost careless manner with which He treats these details, as contrasted with His reverent acceptance of the obligation to accomplish every jot and tittle of the ideal and permanent contents of the Old Testament, shows how relatively unimportant He considered the former.

Finally, we find our Lord making the same use of the Hebrew Bible which is made of the entire Bible by the pious soul of the present time; that is to say, He appropriates its expressions of devotion, recognizes the truth of its moral maxims, and holds Himself bound in principle to the spiritual discipline which it

* D. S. S., i., p. 69.

enjoins. He consecrates the Old Testament at the be ginning of His ministry by answering the tempter in its words; and with His last breath He yields His soul to God in the words of a suffering Hebrew saint.

The only, but sufficient, ground which our Lord lays for a doctrine of the inspiration of the New-Testament writings is to be found in His promises to His disciples. These promises assure both the apostles and us that abundant divine inspiration will be given for founding the Christian Church in the truth of its Head and Redeemer. When making their defense before hostile tribunals, the Spirit of the Father would speak in these disciples of His (Matt. x. 20); this Spirit would teach them in that very hour what they ought to say (Luke xii. 12). Under His guidance they were to disciple the nations at large, and instruct them in all the commands of Christ (Matt. xxviii. 20).

The promises of our Lord to the apostles find their culminating expression, however, in the fourteenth and following chapters of the Gospel according to John. To understand the promises made in these chapters, the following points should be kept constantly in view. The source of the inspiration which is to be given to the apostles is the Spirit of Christ himself. This Holy Spirit, which is here represented as Christ's own visitation, self-disclosure, or indwelling, and also as one sent by Him, far surpasses, in its power to reveal the meaning of the Redeemer's work, all the inspirations of the Old-Testament economy. This Spirit is to make His followers know the truth intimately and profound-

ly, and to strengthen and comfort them in trials and toils. This Spirit is the Spirit of the truth. But this truth is *the* truth which Christ came to bring, and which He really and fully is — comprehended and clothed, as it were, in personal form. More and more completely are they to be guided into *all* this truth; it is to be taught them more fully and completely than Jesus himself had taught it by His personal presence. These promises apply, then, primarily, not to the writing of books, but to the personal work of the apostles in founding the Church of Christ, and in bearing the truth of the Gospel to the world.

It must also be observed that the realizing of all these promises is made dependent upon certain conditions. Indeed, God never makes an unconditional promise of the gift of His Spirit; and Christ promised like God, in this regard, as well as in respect of the munificence of His promise. Of these conditions the principal are moral and religious; they have to do with the obedience and love, the docile, prayerful attitude of the apostles. Any weakness or remissness here would certainly be felt in diminishing the fullness of the realization of the promises of inspiration. For example, Paul could claim, and doubtless actually enjoyed, the special promise of Jesus to His disciples when brought before earthly tribunals, at the time that this apostle made his defense before Ananias; yet Paul acknowledged that he had unwittingly addressed the high-priest in an improper way. Peter, when in the exercise of his apostolic office at Antioch, and even when acting in regard to a certain very important doctrine touching the essen-

tial nature of the Gospel, was, in the judgment of Paul, far from morally faultless.

Moreover, the promises of Jesus to the apostles were not all at once realized to their fullest extent by any of them. Neither the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, nor any subsequent gift of the Spirit, led them at once into all the promised truth. What our Lord means, as reported in John's Gospel, is simply this, that the Holy Spirit will be, when He comes, and ever after, the leader, progressively, of His chosen disciples into this truth. This growth to the knowledge, under such divine guidance, of the height and depth of the Redeemer's being and work would, of course, be manifest in the teaching of the apostles, whether this teaching was given by them in writing or by word of mouth.

It should never be forgotten, however, that without critical studies of the Canon and of the authorship of the books, we cannot connect the promises of Christ to the apostles with any of the New-Testament writings. Such studies have to decide the question whether any particular writing is of apostolic origin or not, and whether its relation to the apostolic teaching is direct or indirect, complete or incomplete. Still further, they must show us to what stage, as it were, of the apostolic advance in teaching the whole truth of Christ each particular writing belongs; and what is the relation of each to the whole body of essential Christian doctrine. Now, it is only a portion of the New Testament for which direct apostolic authorship can be claimed; accordingly, it is to this portion only that the promises of apostolic inspiration primarily apply.

It should be borne constantly in mind, finally, that the promises of our Lord guarantee inspiration only in respect to more and more apprehending *the* truth—the truth pre-eminent, the truth which is the essence of Christianity, and upon which the Church of Christ is founded. That the apostles—much less other writers of the New Testament—would be made infallible in all details of history or in judgment upon maxims of policy, or in anticipation of the future fate of the Church, etc., is nowhere so much as hinted at; it certainly is by no means guaranteed or fairly to be inferred.

When we turn from the teaching of Christ to that of His disciples, and consider what the writers of the New Testament themselves believed concerning the origin and nature of sacred Scripture, we have occasion at once to refer to our interpretation of the foregoing promises. The apostolic founders of Christianity were promised that they should be spiritually led into a knowledge of the whole truth of Christ. But no unimportant part of this truth of Christ is given in the Old-Testament witness to Him. Divine enlightenment as to the substantially true knowledge of that moral and religious truth of the Old Testament which Christ fulfilled, and of His fulfilment of that truth, would accordingly seem to be involved in the promises of Christ to His apostles.

It cannot be claimed, however, that the promises of our Lord to His apostles involve making them infallible interpreters of the Old Testament, much less that they involve this with respect to all the writers of the New Testament. None of these writers, whether apostolic or not, had any equipment for achieving such interpreta-

tion, provided even that infallible interpretation be regarded as possible in any case. The text with which they were familiar, and which they ordinarily used in referring to the Old Testament, was the inaccurate, and in places badly corrupted, Greek version. The Hebrew Scriptures cannot be infallibly interpreted *through* this Greek version. A study of the New-Testament Scriptures plainly shows that by no means all of the authors maintained our Lord's wonderful reserve toward the current pharisaic and rabbinical views of the meaning of the Old Testament.

In speaking of the Old Testament as a whole, the writers of the New Testament use the terms current before their day; and these terms imply the sacred character of the contents of the Old Testament. They call it "*the* Scripture," or "Scriptures," with or without an adjective to designate this character. Their doctrine of the relation in which these holy writings stood to Christ as the founder of Christianity corresponded in its essential features to that of Christ himself. In this regard they realized the promise of the Lord, that the Spirit would progressively lead them into the whole truth of Christ. This, however, does not prevent a very considerable dif ference of view among the different New-Testament writers as to the exact nature of the relation; but it explains why they insisted upon the superiority of the Gospel, and, oftentimes, upon the faulty and imperfect character of the Old-Testament economy.*

It is not necessary to review in detail the minor differences of teaching which exist among the writers of

*D. S. S., i., p. 157 f.

the New-Testament books as to the precise relation of the Old Testament to the new religion. It is sufficient to say that the view of James is, perhaps, the most distinctively Jewish, and that the Epistle of Jude and the Gospel of Matthew agree in general with the view of James; that the writings which bear Peter's name dwell chiefly upon the fulfilment by Christianity of the ideal truth of Old-Testament prophecy; and that the writings of Paul and John represent a phase of doctrine more advanced and farther removed from the prevalent Jewish opinion concerning the entire Hebrew Bible.

It must not be overlooked in passing, that the Epistle of Jude departs from the usual custom of the New Testament by using as Scripture certain rabbinical and apocryphal sources. *Extra*-biblical traditions of the fall of the angels (see verse 6), of the strife of Michael over the body of Moses (verse 9), are appealed to in the same way as the biblical traditions of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, of the wickedness of Cain, Balaam, and Korah, etc. The apocryphal book of Enoch is also undoubtedly cited by Jude as sacred Scripture.

It has been truly said by a modern student of the Bible, that "Paul recognized it as the problem of his apostolic calling to exhibit Christianity in its *divergence* from the old covenant"; this the apostle does in a way which could not fail sometimes to be offensive to the more Judaistically inclined Christians of his day—not to speak of the prevalent rabbinical reverence for the infallible inspiration and absolute perfection of every

minute part of the Mosaic law. Moreover, there is unmistakable evidence that his insisting on the imperfectness of Judaism and the independence of the Gospel was, at least at first, a block of stumbling to some of the other apostles. But the progress of Christian doctrine, as the promise of Christ was realized and His Spirit led the founders of Christianity into the fuller comprehension of all His truth, finally justified most amply the great apostle to the Gentiles.

Paul spoke of ritualistic Jewish precepts as "rudiments of the world," "weak and beggarly rudiments," and characterized those who adhere to them as "children" and "slaves" (see Gal. iv. 1, 3, 9, and Col. ii. 8, 20). The ministry of Moses, which took the form of the decalogue (that most holy of all parts of the Pentateuch to the Jew—handed from heaven, as it was, all graven by the very finger of Jehovah) Paul calls a ministry of the letter and of death, in contrast with the Gospel as a ministry of the Spirit and of life (see 2 Cor. iii. 6–9). It is as mere writing, ink, and stone tablets, compared with the Gospel in men's hearts.

It would be very misleading, however, to conclude from his manner of reference to the Old-Testament Scriptures, that the attitude of Paul was essentially irreverent toward them, or that he meant to proclaim an impassable gulf between these Scriptures and the truth of the Gospel. The inspiration of the apostle is shown in the fact that he did not press his doctrine of the imperfectness of the Old Testament to that extreme which the Christian Church soon came to consider heretical. The Mosaic law he called holy, just, and good, because,

although coming in by reason of transgressions, it served as a discipline and leader of men to the real teacher, Christ. Its enactments were, at best, only the A B C of absolute religion; but when we know how to put the letters together and give them meaning as rightly arranged, we can spell with them the name of *Christ.*

The doctrine of the relation and relative value of the old and the new economy, taught by the writings which bear the name of the apostle John, is essentially the same as that of the apostle to the Gentiles. John considers the law of Moses to be vastly inferior to the revelation of Christ; it has not the "*grace*" and "*truth*" which belong to the incarnate Logos. The *fullness* of grace, the *perfection* of infallible truth, belong to Christ alone. As said Doctor Martin Luther, in his own rough but expressive way: "There is no other doctor, master, nor preacher, but the one doctor, Christ, who is interiorly with the Godhead." Plainly, the apostle John meant to keep his Lord's command, and would have us keep it with reference even to himself and to all the apostles: "Call *no man* rabbi." In the meaning of a teacher worthy of all submission of judgment and to be deemed infallible, there is no "rabbi" among men.

Thus in a diverse but essentially concordant manner do the writers of the New Testament exhibit the main features of their answer to the question, What is the Bible? but it is, of course, only of the circuit of writings known to them in the Hebrew Scriptures that they speak. This "Bible" they all recognize as con-

taining, fixed in written form, certain contents of abiding truth which, although mixed with what is faulty and imperfect, are genuine oracles of God through selected and inspired agents, and which testify to, and prepare for, their own fulfilment in the Gospel of Christ.

How saturated, as it were, are the writings of the New Testament with the spirit and words of the best portions of the Old Testament, no diligent reader of the Bible needs to be told. More than two hundred and fifty formal quotations of the Hebrew Scriptures, and more than four hundred somewhat express and formal references to them, occur in the New Testament; the number of less formal references is many hundreds more. In almost all these cases it is the moral and prophetic truth contained in the quotation or reference which is regarded; rarely do we find any reference to the Old Testament on the part of a writer in the New, for the sake merely of illustrating or embellishing his discourse. Quotations from, or references to, other than biblical authors are also rare; although several occur in the writings and speeches of Paul. Such works are not, however, usually regarded as *sacred* Scripture.

The view which looks upon the inspiration of sacred Scripture as the guaranty of an exact form of words in which it resides, and which is important in respect to every letter and syllable composing it, is inconsistent with the manner in which the writers of the New Testament quote from the Old. Every form of quotation has been employed by some one of these writers. Oc-

casionally they cite the Hebrew text with verbal exactness; sometimes they employ the text of the Greek translation in the same way. When using the latter they sometimes follow it in its departures from the Hebrew, and sometimes not. Often they quote the ancient Scriptures in a very loose way, changing the *words* without any easily assignable motive, in their effort to bring out and enforce the truth which they find in them. Again, at times they give only an inaccurate paraphrase. How different is all this from that devotion to the very words, and that exaltation of the office of the scribe, which all theories of verbal inspiration require!

Nor is any doctrine at all resembling the dogma of the *post*-Reformation theology, taught by that one passage in the New Testament to which the appeal is sometimes most confidently made—the passage is 2 Tim. iii. 16. The main purpose of this passage is simply to declare that inspired Scripture is morally useful in perfecting a righteous character—a thing which all believers in the Bible agree in holding, and which they find amply justified by their own experience. As the revised version correctly translates: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof," etc. Nothing can safely be concluded from this passage alone, either as to the accuracy, perfection, and authority of every book and part of the Hebrew Bible, or as to the nature of sacred Scripture and its inspiration in general.

Some additional light is thrown upon the New-Testament doctrine of the origin and nature of sacred

Scripture by the claims which the New-Testament writers make for themselves. In general it may be said that these claims do not venture beyond the promises of Christ to the apostles. It was as realizing those promises that the apostles considered themselves to be inspired, and to teach with the authority which such inspiration both secures and guards.

Accordingly, no truth can be more important in the consideration of this subject than the following: "*In the new dispensation, as in the old, the true subject of divine revelation and inspiration is the community of believing souls.*" * The Spirit as the revealer of the truth, as the guide into all the truth of Christ, dwells in every trusting, loving follower of the Lord Jesus. Every Christian is then inspired; but in the distribution of gifts from one and the same Spirit, some are stationed as apostles. In the long discussion of this subject which Paul introduces, 1 Cor. xii.–xiv., every essential element of the apostolic inspiration—*except the selective act of Jesus and its accompanying commission*—is distinctly attributed to the entire community of believers.

What has just been said, however, works no injury to the claim that the founding of the Church and the producing of the New Testament rest upon the inspired and authoritative work of the apostles. For this claim itself rests upon two important facts. The apostles had a special call and commission to found and build up in its early stages the Christian Church. The call and

* D. S. S., i., pp. 117 ff. and 185 ff.

the commission were given by Jesus, personally, through His own selective act and command. They had also the intimate knowledge of the facts of Christ's person and work which was deemed necessary for an apostle (see Acts i. 2 f., and ii. 32; iii. 15). They had enjoyed the personal instruction of our Lord; and it was an essential part of His promise to them that the Spirit, when sent, would bring all *those* things to their minds and impart an insight into the meaning of them.

But, in the second place, the apostles had a more abundant endowment of the same revelation and inspiration which belong to Christians in general. As has been fitly said, they were "especially active organs of the Spirit." Being eye-witnesses of the facts, they could tell, as no others could, the true story of the life, death, and resurrection of their Lord; with a vision clarified for spiritual insight they could much better than others interpret the meaning of what they knew, and could see farther, more clearly, and more infallibly into the mysteries of the Gospel.

The manner in which the apostles themselves understand and put forth their own claims accords with the truths just stated. The earliest and then most important application of the promised inspiration referred to the preaching and oral teaching of the apostles rather than to their writings. It cannot be denied, however, that the same claims apply to those writings which have an apostolic authorship, and concern the truth of the Gospel, as truly as they do to the apostolic preaching. But the apostles, too, come under the general principle: *Not*

*one word in the entire Bible can be found to warrant the theory of a peculiar or peculiarly infallible inspiration given to any one in order to fit him for the work of writing.** Writing is only one way—and that a way to which the apostles resorted with comparative infrequency—of teaching men the truth of the Gospel and its application to the life of the Christian. All the apostles, however, undoubtedly held that whether it was by word of mouth or by writing, when they taught the truths of the Gospel, they taught as inspired messengers, and in an authoritative way.

It is their firm persuasion of the truth of the Gospel, with the facts of which they were familiar, and into the meaning of which they had been divinely helped to look, that gives the apostles their tone of confidence in teaching, advising, appealing, exhorting, and entreating. But there should be no failure to notice that there is a quickly descending scale in the tones of their confidence, as the matters they write about become less intimately related to the central truths of redemption.

The claims of the apostles to be inspired and authoritative teachers of the truth of Christ can be applied to the entire circuit of the New-Testament writings only after several questions have been raised and answered. These questions are of the kind which *can* be answered only by a devout and scholarly examination of the New Testament itself. They *cannot* be answered by declamation, or by appeal to passion and prejudice, or as dogmas of theology simply, or according to the wishes of the unlearned reader or preacher. Among such questions are

*D. S. S., i., p. 218 f. and 757 f.

the following: What portions of the New Testament really fall under the title of that "truth" into which Christ promised that the apostles should be led, and which they claim to be inspired authoritatively to set forth? What portions of the New Testament were written by others than apostles; and how far can we apply to these portions the same argument which applies to the portions written by the apostles? How did the Christian Church come to gather all their writings into one collection; and did it regard them as all alike the product of apostolic teaching and all alike authoritative? Did the inspiration of the writers extend to the words which they employed; and did it secure them from all error on matters of fact or teaching, not a legitimate part of this pre-eminent truth which they primarily designed to teach? It will not be until the sequel is reached that we shall find the correct answer to all of these questions; but one or two of them we proceed at once briefly to consider.

The contents of the New Testament may be divided into at least three classes, with respect to their relation to the Gospel, to that truth of Christ into which the Spirit led the writers. How the three classes are to be distinguished,* we do not now inquire. Of these three classes one comprises those fundamental facts and doctrines which are plainly taught in the writings as necessary elements of the truth of Christ. Another covers certain statements or opinions about facts of a historical, archæological, or scientific kind, or about the meaning of a passage in some other writing, which do not affect

* D. S. S., i., p. 198 f.

the truthfulness of the facts and doctrines of the first class. The third class includes matters of fact and inferences which appear to lie between the other two classes. It is in the case of the matters of fact and inferences of the third class that our most serious difficulties arise.

For example, to consider the directions of Paul about his temporal affairs, or his unkept promise to visit Rome or to pass through Corinth, as uninspired, works no harm whatever to the security of the apostolic doctrine of the Gospel. Mistakes occurring in Stephen's speech do not render the book of Acts a less trustworthy account of the apostolic work in founding the Church; the apparent contradictions in historical details of the first three gospels do not impair the value of their consentaneous witness to the life and work of Jesus. When Paul's memory slips (1 Cor. x. 8), and he writes 23,000 instead of 24,000, or when it fails him (1 Cor. i. 14 f.), and he cannot tell how many he baptized at Corinth; in what way does this injure his apostolic authority concerning the truths of salvation?

Indeed, the apostle himself plainly recognizes the difference between his own opinion, even when given as the opinion of an inspired apostle, and the infallible word of Christ, with respect to the relations of the sexes in married life (see 1 Cor. vii.). In this case, we notice that the advice of Paul was governed by his erroneous impression that the Second Coming of our Lord was then just at hand. That Paul and the other apostles, during at least the earlier years of their ministry, held this erroneous impression, their writings most abundantly

show. This erroneous impression may be placed in the third of the above-mentioned classes.

In common with all the previous authors of the Bible, the authors of its latest books never give us a hint that they regard themselves or one another as gifted with any special form of infallible inspiration *as writers* of sacred books. Nor does their language warrant the conclusion that they would have held any dogma of verbal inspiration as applying to these Christian writings. There is, indeed, one passage in Paul's Epistles (1 Cor. ii.), which contains words that have often been construed as a claim to verbal inspiration. But what Paul here affirms is simply that his apostolic *form* of presenting the Gospel is adapted to the divine nature of the Gospel; for both the knowledge of the truth and the disposition and power to use the appropriate form for presenting it, are the gift of the Spirit. The teachers of human philosophy in that day made an excessive show of logic and rhetoric. The preachers of the Gospel used simple and unpretentious speech. This was not a rhetorical trick on their part, but the result of the same divine indwelling which revealed to them the truth they preached.

In only one place in the New Testament are any Christian writings even apparently referred to as being on a par with those of the Old Testament—that is, as being in the peculiar sense, "sacred" Scriptures. The writer of Second Peter (iii. 15 f.) refers to certain epistles of "our beloved brother Paul," as in some sort on a par with the rest of "the Scriptures." The late date and doubtful canonicity of Second Peter, in the estimate

of the early Church, make the interpretation of this passage very difficult. If it were to be understood as a recognition by one apostle of the writings of another as real parts of sacred Scripture, it would only teach what all Christians at present concur in holding.

From our advanced Christian point of view we now turn back to take that assumed by the writers of the Hebrew Scriptures themselves.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VIEWS OF THE BIBLICAL WRITERS.

(Continued.)

It can never be made an obligation of the Christian faith to accept, without questioning, all the opinions of the ancient Hebrew authors concerning the origin and nature of the Hebrew Bible. When, then, we ask the Old Testament itself for an answer to our inquiry, What is the Bible? we are to exercise that freedom which belongs of right to the biblical scholar who is, at the same time, a loyal Christian. It has already been shown that the great and authoritative teachers of Christianity recognized a fallible, temporary, and inferior side to the Hebrew Scriptures. They did this even with respect to the matters upon which these Scriptures are strongest—namely, moral and spiritual matters. But with respect to matters in themselves inferior, such as the correctness of the language, the authorship of the books, historical minutiæ, etc., the writers of the New Testament have nothing whatever to teach concerning the authority of the Old Testament. It is as *Christians* and not as Jewish rabbis of the era before the birth of our Lord that we consider the Old Testament.

An examination of the claims made for themselves by the ancient Hebrew writers shows that the mere occurrence of such claims, whether direct or indirect, is exceedingly rare. Indeed, in the Old Testament as in the New,

the consciousness of writing under inspiration is seldom manifested. Instances of a divine commission to commit to writing certain revelations previously received by inspiration are somewhat more numerous. But all such *claims* cover, in the aggregate, only a small portion of the Hebrew Bible.

The one most obvious and extensive claim which the ancient Hebrew writings make to the title of sacred Scripture arises indirectly from the nature of their contents. In the later writings of the Hebrew Bible, however, a few notices of the earlier writings are found which show the fruits of reflection to be already matured or maturing. These notices apply, for the most part, to the written "Torah," or law of the Lord, understood in general to have been given to Israel by Moses. But sometimes they contain indirect recognition of the "word of the Lord" as it had come to earlier prophets and obtained for itself a record in the manuscript-rolls ascribed to the name of some of these prophets or to other unknown authors. The bare fact that certain writings somehow get for themselves a place in the canon is the first claim of any kind which can be put forth in favor of regarding them as in any sense sacred or inspired. The Song of Songs, ascribed to Solomon, large portions of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, First and Second Chronicles, and the entire Book of Esther, belong to this very doubtful class of sacred writings. It will be seen, then, that no theory as to what the Bible is, which will apply alike to all of its parts, can possibly be constructed by fair inference from the Hebrew Scriptures alone. Accordingly, we must be content with inquiring how the writers

of these Scriptures regarded the law and its record, the prophecies, whether written or oral, and the other remnants of their national literature.

Certain silent assumptions regarding the relations of Jehovah, the covenant God of the Hebrews, and this one people among all others of the earth, pervade the books of the Old Testament—as, indeed, they pervade the later and apocryphal writings of the nation. It is assumed, in general, that the history,* laws, ceremonial, and dominant national ideas of Israel, are in some special sense the gift of Jehovah to the nation and the object of His interest and care. It is assumed, in particular, that a covenant or solemn compact was made at the very earliest period of the national life between this people and the one living and true God, and that all the national history may properly be considered in the light of the making, breaking, renewing, and fulfilling of this covenant. It is also assumed, in particular, that the work of Jehovah with respect to the institution and executing of this covenant involved a number of revelations of Himself, or special self-disclosures that were made to selected members of the nation who acted as media.

The foregoing assumptions are indeed denied by a certain school of biblical critics, often and not unjustly called "destructive." For ourselves we admit heartily the truth of these assumptions, and find inconclusive the arguments urged against them. But it does not follow that even these "destructive" views of the Old Testament, if established, would undermine, or in any way seriously impair, our faith as Christians. The char

* D. S. S., i., p. 92 f.

acter of the Christian religion commends itself; and no theory in explanation of the way in which the Old-Testament writings arose can long confuse the judgment of men as to what Christianity essentially is. Whatever was the order in which its spiritual nature manifested itself, *the Christian religion is now in its entirety an existing institution and can never be removed.* And whatever may be concluded as to the authorship of the Pentateuch, or as to the origin of the Mosaic law, Jesus was right when He summed up its best essential meaning in love to God and love to man.

The direct claims of the writings of Mosaism* to a place in sacred Scripture, so far as these claims are found in the writings themselves, depend almost entirely upon the alleged nature of their contents. In two or three cases, indeed, we find provision made that certain parts of the law shall be taught to the people; either by constituting the priest as their interpreter (Lev. x. 11; Deut. xxiii. 10) or by providing for their being read at the end of every seven years (Deut. xxxi. 11). In certain cases also, Moses is said to have been divinely commissioned to record some event in writing—as, for example, an account of the battle of Rephidim (Exod. xvii. 14) and a list of the stations in the desert (Num. xxxiii. 2). Apparently the object of recording this particular battle was that the threat against the Amalekites might be remembered; and the object of making out the list of stations was to furnish a memorial of the fidelity of Jehovah.

It is otherwise, however, with the record described

* D. S. S., i., p. 98 f.

as the "Book of the Covenant" (Exod. xxiv. 7). This is declared to be the fundamental theocratic law of the nation. It is said to contain the words spoken by Jehovah to Moses and accepted by the people as the basis of the covenant between Jehovah and themselves. It seems originally to have comprised the Decalogue with its ten "covenant words," and the covenant constitution with its ordinances relating to divine worship, and to the rights and duties of Israel (probably, Exod xx. 22 to xxiii. 33).

The Decalogue itself is elsewhere stated to have been written with the "finger of God." Now, however we may interpret the meaning of this statement; and whatever may be the reality corresponding to the figure of speech involved in speaking of God as *writing with His finger* upon stone tables; two things are obviously true concerning the Decalogue. Although it consists of a series of fundamental ordinances divinely given to the nation, we quote the authority of Paul for considering it as mere writing, ink, and stone tablets, and greatly inferior to the epistle which God writes in the heart of every true Christian. Moreover, neither of the two records which we have of the one Decalogue can by any possibility be regarded as verbally and infallibly inspired; and this for the simple reason that they differ, not only in slight particulars of words, but also in a noteworthy way as to the reason for the Sabbath-law and as to the command against coveting.

Still further, a critical examination of the present record of the covenant constitution (Exod. xx. 22 to xxiii. 33) appears to show that it cannot be considered as

accurately representing in its present form what was on any one occasion revealed by God to Moses. Some of its laws and customs were probably established among the Israelites previous to Moses, and some of them after his time. Judged from a moral and religious point of view, some of them are trivial and temporary—as the arrangements for a compensation for asses fallen into pits and for oxen of any owner that have been gored by a neighbor's ox; some of them are distinctly opposed to the requirements of an advanced civilization (see xxi. 20 ff.); and yet these enactments are all joined together and coupled with exhortations of the most solemn and permanent value, in this covenant constitution. That is to say, what is confessedly (as viewed from the Christian point of standing) imperfect and transitory, and what is of eternal obligation; what was enacted previously to this time, and what was enacted subsequently, is all given in one record of words, figuratively said to have been "spoken by Jehovah to Moses."

The noble ode of Deut. xxxii. 1–43 is said to have been written by Moses at divine command, in order to serve as a witness to the people; it is also said to have been taught to the people verbally by both Moses and Joshua.

The main legal part of Deuteronomy (chapters iv. 45 to xxvi. 15) also claims to be a Torah (or law) which was not only given but written by Moses (see xxxi. 9). What modern biblical study has to say with reference to this latter claim, and how far the present Hebrew text can be considered to represent, whether in substance of

teaching or in form of words, the writing said to have been left by the great lawgiver himself, are questions that must be treated in other connections. We note in this connection, however, that at most the claims found within the Pentateuch itself to an origin from Moses in any written form whatever, cover only a small part of the whole. In none of these cases, moreover, have we any other than an indirect claim to inspiration for the *record* as such.

Nor do those claims in behalf of the written law of Moses which occur in the later books of the Hebrew canon add, to any considerable extent, to our so deficient data for forming a biblical doctrine of the nature of sacred Scripture. At most, such claims only indicate that some collection of writings, known as the "Book of the Law," came to be recognized as sacred; and that the reason for its being so recognized was because the writings contained the ordinances and testimonies of a legal kind on which the peculiar relation of Jehovah to the nation was instituted and maintained. The written "Book of the Law," in the time of Josiah (2 Kings xxii. 8 ff.), probably comprised nothing more than the substance of Deuteronomy.

In the very latest books of the Hebrew Bible,* in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, and in some of the prophetical writings (comp. Dan. ix. 11, 13, and Zech. vii 12), the phrase "the law of Jehovah" repeatedly occurs. In these books, as a rule, the priestly and ceremonial ordinances of the law, as distinguished from the civil and more purely ethical, are highly regarded. The

* D. S. S., i., p. 108 f.

written Torah is represented as publicly read for the instruction and rebuke of the people; its precepts are coupled with those that were given by the prophets, and the whole is considered as constituting a sort of recorded body of divine enactments and revelations. Some of the Psalms contain either certain obscure references to a book of the law, or else a simple mention of it under some one of several titles. Psalm xl. 7 refers to a "roll of the book," which may perhaps be best understood as Deuteronomy, and which is to be used as a kind of *vade-mecum* for the king. It is impossible to say with confidence how much of the present Pentateuch is referred to, and authenticated as a sacred written Torah for Israel, by these latest books; but it is not unlikely that considerable portions of it, in addition to the main part of Deuteronomy, are to be included.

We see, then, that the Old-Testament authority for regarding the books now popularly ascribed to Moses as inspired and sacred Scripture, is very different indeed from what is ordinarily supposed. The claim which the writings of Mosaism make upon our regard is almost entirely indirect; it arises from the nature of what they contain. *A* written law was indeed early supposed to have been left to the nation by Moses, who was, of course, himself considered as the chosen and inspired servant of Jehovah. But it is neither claimed nor implied that this written law covered more than a minor portion of the present Pentateuch. Instead of its being an essential tenet of the Old Testament itself that *the record* of the laws of the nation is, in general, inspired in a peculiar manner, and to a degree of infal-

ibility, no doctrine of its inspiration is anywhere inculcated in the Old Testament. The "Law" came from God through Moses,—this is the substance of the Old-Testament view.

Christ and the apostles have taught us to look upon even the most sacred portions of the ancient law of the Hebrews from a higher point of view. That law, for example, puts the right of retaliation and the provisions for divorce, and for the lenient treatment of masters who in anger mutilate their slaves, among the most sacred commandments spoken by the mouth of Jehovah to Moses. But *our* teachers, who stand far above even that favored ancient servant of Jehovah, regard those things as statutes necessitated by the low condition of the people, imperfect, temporary, morally blameworthy from the Gospel's higher point of view. For does not our Lord himself declare that the Mosaic ordinance concerning divorce is no better than a virtual permission of adultery? And yet these authoritative teachers see, what the Christian is to learn from them to see, that the law was given by God to serve as a "schoolmaster" until Christ should come. This is its divine side —the side on account of which we regard it as inspired, and its record as worthy of a place in sacred Scripture. But to hold that the writings of Mosaism are infallible, either in opinion as to their own origin and historical development or as to moral quality, we must listen to other teachings than those that were promulgated by Christ and His apostles.

The prophetical writings of the Old Testament have a somewhat different and more precise claim to be re-

garded as, in themselves, sacred and inspired. To be a true prophet is to be inspired; the words of the prophet, who speaks prophetically, are *per se* words of the Lord. If, then, these words are faithfully recorded, the record will naturally, it will almost necessarily, be regarded as sacred and inspired. The character of the *prophetical writings*, however, is entirely dependent upon the character of the *prophet*. We need, therefore, to form a true picture of what the Hebrews understood by a prophet, and of how they regarded the inspiration which every true prophet enjoyed.

The *agent* in prophetic inspiration is, of course, the Spirit of Jehovah, who is the living God. To His Spirit the Hebrews rightly ascribed every good thing. The *subject* of inspiration is primarily the entire faithful people of the covenant of Jehovah; the gift of the Spirit is "to thee, O Israel, and to thy seed, to such as keep the covenant." The promise of Jehovah to Jacob is that His Spirit is upon him and his seed forever. The promise recorded in Deut. xviii. 9–22, although having its highest fulfilment in the case of that greatest of all the prophets (the Messiah), refers primarily to the whole class of prophets. Thus, too, we actually find the prophets, unlike the priests, not restricted as to sex, or age, or rank, or tribal connections. Prophets swarmed in Israel; but their messages and recorded utterances have been only in small measure preserved to us.

The *law* which defines the call, the consciousness, the office, the intent, and the end, of the Hebrew prophet, is to be understood in connection with that

great idea which Israel emphasized for the entire world —the idea of "righteousness." The sphere of Hebrew prophetic activity is the sphere of righteousness. The call which God uttered to the entire nation was a call to righteousness. The culture which He gave to them was a discipline in righteousness.

Certain elements which at times entered into Hebrew prophecy belong to what is merely sporadic in its character and destined to pass away. Most of those elements are connected with the so-called "schools" * of prophets which at times flourished in Israel. The contagiousness of prophetic impulse, the imitation of the great prophets by their admiring followers and helpers, the tendency to physical excesses such as characterize the prophecy of surrounding heathen peoples, the use of prophecy for petty purposes and private ends—these things belong to the ruder ages of its development.

But Hebrew prophecy underwent a process of growth which resulted in bringing the great moral and spiritual factors and forces concerned in it more prominently to view. Four or five stages may be discovered in this process. Preceding the time of Moses, it is patriarchal in quality, and manifests itself in the personal guidance of its recipient. Then, for a time, the manifestations of prophetic inspiration are concentrated in Moses. In the next period, Hebrew prophecy appears as enveloped in surroundings of heathenism, and the prophets are seen as grouped about the persons of Elijah and Elisha. In the next age its full bloom is revealed; this

* D. S. S., i., p. 121 f.

is the age when the great ethical and especially the Messianic ideas of Hebrew prophecy are coming to their maturity; this is the age which gives us those great prophetic works that are the real treasures of Old-Testament Scripture. And, finally, the bloom falls away: for the time of putting forth the choicest flowers of prophecy is over, and the time has come for gathering its fallen leaves and preparing them for preservation in a canon of prophetical writings.

On inquiring more particularly into the true conception of the Hebrew prophet, we find that we must consider three elements—namely, revelation, inspiration, and utterance. The thought and will of Jehovah are inwardly disclosed to the prophet; in connection with this disclosure, his soul is morally quickened and elevated; but the truth cannot remain concealed, since it is a *message* and is meant for the moral welfare of the people. All these three elements are clearly implied by certain terms* employed in the Old Testament. The prophet is a "speaker" for God, a "messenger" of Jehovah, a "seer." Upon him the Spirit of Jehovah is said to "fall," or "his hand is laid"; to him the word of Jehovah is said to "come."

The nature of the prophetic consciousness is to be understood by examining the claims made for the genuine Hebrew prophet, with respect to his vocation, commission, and inspired mental state. Although the subject of divine inspiration was primarily the entire people of Jehovah, yet each one who set himself up as a teacher sent from God to the people, felt the need of

*D. S. S., i., p. 125 f.

support from a particular divine summons to his office. Under leadership, by imitation, and for a time, even Saul might be deemed a prophet. But men like Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah came forward as prophets, by individual vocation from the Lord (see Amos vii. 14; Isa. vi.; Jer. i. 2). How the memory of this call from the Lord was sometimes impressed upon the soul of His servant, the prophet, we may judge by reading thoughtfully the sixth chapter of Isaiah, or the first three chapters of Ezekiel.

The Hebrew prophet also regarded himself as commissioned to *utter* the "word of the Lord." Hence he goes where there are hearers—to the temple as a place of the gathering of crowds,* or to the gate of the city. To keep back his message would be to sin against Jehovah. He is an apostle of righteousness; and woe to him, if he speak not Jehovah's word; and woe to the people, if they heed not that word. Not only in respect to speech, but in person, conduct, and life, he may become Jehovah's commissioner. He preaches with his prophetic girdle, or by wearing bonds and yokes, as did Jeremiah. His own past history may appear to him as a part of the truth imparted to him by Jehovah; so to Hosea did his sad experience with his unfaithful wife appear.

Called and commissioned thus, the Hebrew prophet must be divinely transformed in his moral and spiritual being. Even to accept his call he needs to have his iniquity taken away, his sin purged (see Isa. vi. 5–8). It is this purified and elevated moral consciousness which

* Jer. vii. 1 f., xix. 14, xxvi. 2; Hos. ix. 8; and comp. D. S. S., i., 131 f.

constitutes the important part of the prophetic inspiration. It is true that a condition of ecstasy is in some cases attributed to the prophet as a result of his prophetic inspiration; but such cases are to be regarded as belonging to that in the Hebrew prophecy which is of a lower and temporary order, and most closely allies it with the heathen soothsaying.* Saul strips to the tunic and lies prostrate on the ground. Balaam is represented as falling into a trance. Ezekiel, indeed, falls down overpowered by the divine vision, but stands up again in order to receive the divine revelation (i. 28, ii. 1); and Daniel, although stunned at first and made sick for several days, has to recover before he can be intrusted with the entire divine self-disclosure. The Old Testament nowhere represents the state of ecstasy as an essential thing in prophetic inspiration.

In genuine Hebrew prophecy the Spirit of God is to be regarded as arousing and elevating the moral and religious nature of the prophet; this includes the illumining of his faculty of insight, the purifying of his moral emotions, and the strengthening of his purpose to further the ends of righteousness. The peculiar insight, and the consequent foresight, of the Hebrew prophet are therefore a result of his inspiration. Jehovah does not dictate to him in express terms what he shall declare of the true significance of occurrences around him, or of the outcome in the future of the present courses of conduct pursued by his contemporaries; but Jehovah quickens the prophet so that he can "*see*" these things. The prediction of the Hebrew

*D. S. S., i., p. 134 f.

prophet regarding the future, is, therefore, always designed as a message of righteousness and grace to the men of his own time: "Because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

As to the nature of the prediction of the Hebrew prophets, and as to the question of its errorlessness or imperfection, we shall inquire in another place. It is important now simply to emphasize the fact that the inspiration of these messengers of Jehovah is essentially moral and religious, and that whatever superior insight or foresight it afforded is to be understood as the result of its essential nature.

The moral feeling of the Hebrew prophet is excited in sympathy with the feeling of God who has called and commissioned him, and who has imparted to him his insight and foresight regarding the nature and consequences of moral action. His heart burns against sin, as does the heart of Jehovah; it softens also with pity and compassion toward those who suffer on account of their sins. Yet he rejoices in Jehovah, though the fig-tree shall not blossom (see Hab. iii. 17 f.); and, again, sympathetically feels the woes advancing against even Moab (see Isa. xvi. 9–11) and Babylon (see Isa. xxi. 1–10), the oppressors of Israel. But especially does a grand and pure joy stir his prophetic soul when, with straining and tear-dimmed eyes, he looks beyond the present evil times and beholds the coming moral regeneration of the nation. Then he utters that prophetic cry which more than any other glorifies his office; he speaks *comfort*, and tells of salvation to the righteous and suffering remnant of the faithful.

Primarily, therefore, all the elements of this prophecy are personal; they concern the intercourse of men by speaking and hearing what God is going to do as dependent upon the conduct both of those who speak and of those who hear. The work of committing his visions to writing was, with a Hebrew prophet, an entirely secondary affair. With the claims to inspiration of mere scribes and compilers in their work of collecting and editing the prophetic utterances of the earlier inspired men, what has hitherto been said has no immediate connection. We must then examine further the nature of the argument by which we pass from the claims of the true Hebrew prophets to the claims for the prophetic writings of our present Hebrew Bible

Only a few writings of Prophetism, *as writings*, present a direct claim to be the "word of the Lord" to Israel. The entire contents of some books are, indeed, thus designated, although they contain an epitome of prophecies extending over three or four reigns of contemporaneous kings (see, for example, Mic. i. 1; Hos. i. 1; Zeph. i. 1). In other instances (Amos and Jeremiah) the written prophecies are called "words" of the prophet, but with a qualifying phrase to show that they are prophetic words. Such prophetic writings as these are, therefore, to be regarded as inspired, not because the record was made by a scribe who was in an inspired and infallible condition of mind when making it, but because they are the record (presumably in the main faithful) of the prophetic utterances of an inspired man. In certain other instances (for example, Isa. i. 1, and elsewhere) the oracle, originally

delivered orally, is spoken of as a "vision" when reviewed for the purpose of committing it to writing. The prophet when writing, is a prophet still.

Numerous instances are also found of a divine commission to prepare, in a permanent form of record, the contents of revelations previously made to some prophet.* For example, in Isaiah viii. 1, the prophet is directed to take a large tablet and engrave upon it in a distinct character, "Concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz," so as to set it up in some public place and thus call attention to it. An interesting narrative in Jeremiah (chap. xxxvi.) tells us how this prophet, at divine command, dictated to his faithful scribe Baruch, the prophetic oracles which Jehovah had given him concerning Israel and Judah, and the nations generally. Other portions of the prophetic writings of the Hebrew Bible are ascribed to the activity of the prophets themselves, though produced without any divine commission to write. It is the prophetic *truth* which is of importance; the manner of its preservation is relatively unimportant.

Gradually, as the activity of the greater prophets in the golden age of Hebrew prophecy continued and developed, a certain body of recognized prophetic truth was formed; some of this was recorded in writing and quoted by one prophet from another; but some of it was apparently preserved by oral tradition. Rarely, we find one prophet expressly authenticating another; as when Micah (iii. 12) is quoted by Jeremiah (xxvi. 18), who gives a summary of the earlier prophecies in a declaration which must have made a great impression upon

* D. S. S., i., p. 144 f.

the contemporaries of Micah. In Isaiah (xxxiv. 16) certain oracles concerning the fate of Edom, and including some predictions of Isaiah himself, are spoken of as the "book of Jehovah." And in that very late book, called by the name of Daniel, reference is made to certain canonical Scriptures which must have included the prophecies of Jeremiah (see Dan. ix. 2).

The faithful record of prophetic utterances may then be considered, *in a secondary way*, as worthy to be called inspired. But critical study must answer the question whether any particular biblical book was really composed by this or that alleged author; only thus can we ascertain, often even doubtfully at best, whether the name given to a particular collection of writings really belongs to it. Nor can the belief of the Hebrew scribe or editor as to the date and authorship of the prophetic writings he copies or edits be regarded as an inspired and infallible belief.

Those books of the Old Testament which do not belong either to the writings of the law or to the prophetic literature make few claims for themselves to be considered as "words of the Lord" through inspired media. Indeed the valid reasons for assigning to these books a place in sacred Scripture lie almost wholly outside of such claims. Certain writings of this class have been called the "Hokhmah," or wisdom of the Old Testament; this title covers especially the Books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, and perhaps many of the Psalms also. From the time of Solomon onward we hear of men among the Hebrews who were styled

pre-eminently "the wise."* Many of the reflections of these men on nature, on the practical ordering of the world, and the course of human affairs, have been preserved for us in the Old Testament. Such persons called "the wise" seem to have been distinguished from both the priests and the prophets, as late as Jeremiah, who apparently did not highly regard their services in his own time (see Jer. viii. 9 f.). It is only in conformity with that comprehensive idea of inspiration held by the Hebrews, which ascribed all human intelligence to the Divine Spirit, that the so-called "Hokhmah" of the Old Testament can claim to be inspired.

The claims of the Psalms to a place in sacred and inspired Scripture vary with the nature of their contents. Some of them obviously spring from the consciousness of the divine character of the Law, and deal with God's discipline of the nation, with its dark riddles of providence, its temptations to distrust Him, or its reasons for uttering His praises. The experiences of the covenant people as predicted in the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy, and as fulfilled in its recorded history, afford inspiring subjects for many of these sacred songs. Others of them join with the experience of the nation, the more strictly personal affairs of the author — his sins, sorrows, trials, struggles with his enemies, blessings and hopes and expectations of triumph. It is chiefly for this latter reason that so many of these Psalms have become consecrated by centuries of Christian usage, and are fitly considered among the most precious portions of inspired and sacred Scripture.

* D. S. S., i., p. 148 f.

Certain Psalms also partake of the characteristics of genuine Hebrew prophecy.* It is true that, with one exception, the Psalms do not employ the prophetic formula. But a close connection exists between the prophets and the psalmists; for the earlier prophets made use of music to gain inspiration for themselves, and the language of prophecy is very like the language of poetry—indeed, at times it becomes strictly poetic. Only a few of the Psalms claim for themselves, either as a whole or in part, a "thus-saith-the-Lord." But among the number that make this claim are the noble odes of thanksgiving recorded in 2 Samuel, chapters xxii. and xxiii. Chief among the Psalms, and expressly recognized by the New Testament, are, of course, those called Messianic. But the Messianic idea takes various shapes and expresses itself with varying degrees of clearness and fullness in the poetic as it does in the other prophetic literature of Israel.

The only historical notice found in the Old Testament of any portion of the Psalter occurs in Nehemiah (xii. 46). Here we are told that when there was a great revival of the temple-service of song certain institutions were re-established as they had been originally created by David and Solomon. So we are informed that, in the days of David and Asaph of old, there were leaders of singers and a singing of praises and thanksgiving to God. But neither the authorship, the inspiration, nor the canonical authority of any particular Psalm or collection of Psalms is authenticated in this way.

* D. S. S., i., p. 149 f.

Our previous examination illustrates the impossibility of making any appeal to the Bible itself to authenticate the inspired and sacred nature of all its different portions. The Bible itself tells us little as to what the Bible is; on the contrary, it leaves us to answer this question by bringing its writings to the test of critical examination and of intelligent Christian experience. Fortunately, the Bible is given to us not to teach us about itself, but to teach us about God and Christ and about the way of the Christian life. It is far more efficient as a teacher because it hides itself behind its truth and invites us to consider, not primarily what *it* is, but whether its statements of fact and doctrine are not true.

The historical writings of the Old Testament, as of the New, constitute a by no means unimportant part of the whole; but no claim is made for them by the biblical writers to a place in sacred Scripture beyond that very indirect, inferred claim which arises from the nature of their contents. The ancient historical writings narrate the events of Israel's career as looked at from the theocratic or the priestly point of view. They were *sacred* in the sight of Israel because they contained a record of what Jehovah did to and for the people in framing and executing His covenant with them. They are sacred to us because of their connection with the legal and prophetic preparation of the nation and the world for Christ's coming, and because they show us how God revealed Himself in history as the Redeemer of mankind.

In concluding this subject it may be said that the

loftiest and most convincing claim which a Christian can make for the writings of the Bible arises from the relation in which they stand to the person and work of Christ. Indeed, were it not for this relation they would command little more of interest from us and have little more of authority over us than do those other religious writings of antiquity which, like the Hebrew Bible, have been by many deemed sacred and inspired. The biblical writings alone bring before us Christ as the Redeemer of man.

On the other hand, the broadest and most generally applicable claim which the writings of the Bible themselves make to the title of "sacred Scripture" arises from the nature of their contents. These writings hold, fixed as it were in scriptural form, the contents of divine revelations of truth made to divinely enlightened souls; they also record the history of this process of divine self-revealing until the Christian Church had been founded and instructed by Christ and His apostles. The scriptural doctrine of sacred Scripture depends, then, upon the scriptural view of the nature of revelation and of inspiration—a subject to which we shall return at another time.

And now, negatively, it must be maintained that the same origin, authority, and value cannot be ascribed, on the basis of its own claims, to all portions of the Bible alike. Moreover, although the revelation and inspiration of which the Old and New Testaments speak are not confined to any one age, sex, portion, set of authors, or manner of composition, there is not a single word in the Bible from the first verse of Genesis

to the last of Revelation that warrants any theory whatsoever of a special and infallible inspiration given to the *writers* of Scripture as such. Indeed, the writers of sacred writings are rarely brought to our notice in the Bible; the scribe is rather relegated to the background. The preacher of righteousness, the preacher of the Gospel, the proclaimer to the people of the word of Jehovah and of the word of Jesus—these are the personalities and this is the work in which divine revelation and inspiration have their freest and widest influence. The regard for the record of these proclamations, and of the course and results of these sacred and inspired actions, was at first a matter of secondary and derived consequence. It was because of the progressive and historical nature of the whole process of revelation, and of the Christianizing of the world, that this record at last became of such incalculable value.

It is gratifying to notice that the claims of the Bible itself coincide so completely with the great and permanent features of the doctrine of the Church catholic regarding the nature and origin of the Bible. No one who accepts these claims can, in the name of the Bible itself, be restricted from holding further as to its nature and origin, whatever the facts and legitimate inferences of modern biblical study require. No one who accepts the great and common elements of the belief of the Church catholic upon this same subject can justly be accused of infidelity to her teachings, can fitly be deemed or styled heretical.

CHAPTER V.

THE BIBLE AND THE SCIENCES OF NATURE.

Our inquiry into the origin and nature of the Bible must now be taken to the test of the facts; these facts are the phenomena of the biblical books, as well as the history and antiquities of those past times and extinct nations among which the books arose. The science which discerns and pronounces upon the bearings of these facts is biblical criticism. Such criticism is sometimes distinguished as either "lower" or "higher." When this distinction is employed, by the "lower criticism" is meant the study which has to do with the text of the biblical writings—that is, with the form of words in which the authors left these writings and with its best possible reproduction as a basis for grammatical and lexical interpretation. By the "higher criticism" is meant that study which tries to reproduce the influences and circumstances out of which the biblical books arose, and thus exhibit them as true children of their own time. It is, therefore, the very laudable effort of this "higher" criticism to live over again, as faithfully and vividly as possible, the real life of the writers, and to understand what they wrote by understanding how, and under what circumstances, they came to write as they did.

The sciences known as physical or natural have in

the last century attained a rapid and extended growth, New conceptions of nature at large, of her laws and methods of action, of her inner meaning, and of man's place in nature, have been the inevitable result. The sciences of mind and of history have been subject to scarcely less marked and extensive changes. Even the current views on certain ethical questions—such, for example, as slavery, the relations of the sexes, the obligations of the governing and governed classes, the rights and duties of those at warfare with each other, etc.—have been greatly modified. This progress of modern science in all these forms could not fail to have its effect on the current views as to the character of the biblical books.

In the next few chapters we shall investigate the answer which the different modern sciences, when their results are compared with the results of biblical criticism, require or encourage us to make to the question, What is the Bible? This one question, however, divides itself into a number of questions, the first of which may be stated in the following way: What do the modern sciences of nature declare with reference to the biblical view of those subjects with which these sciences deal?

The inquiry just raised implies that the two kinds of sciences concerned in its answer are both to have their rights respected. The natural sciences, so called, do not in themselves help us to understand what the Bible means; *that* must be determined by biblical study. For example, all the discoveries of modern astronomy and geology do not of themselves throw

one ray of clearer light on the real thought of the early chapters of Genesis. The science of biblical interpretation alone can decide what these chapters mean. This latter science involves a knowledge of Hebrew and the allied languages, of the Oriental and ancient views of nature, and of the biblical way of looking at God and the world. To be a good geologist or astronomer fits one to describe the strata of the earth and the development of species and to speculate upon the nebular theory of the universe; but it is likely to unfit one to enter into the simple unscientific mind of the Hebrew writer.

On the other hand, for biblical science to tell geology or astronomy what it must discover the rocks or the stars to be, because the biblical account of creation means thus and so, is as impertinent as for those natural sciences to tell the interpreter what he must make the Bible mean.

We shall do most real honor both to Holy Scripture and to God's record of creation in nature itself if we bring no vain force to bear on either, in the effort to make the two agree. Let us rather be content to see what each party really testifies, and how far they actually do accord.

In the strictest modern conception of "science" the Bible teaches us little or nothing that can properly be designated by this name. This fact is due to several causes, chief among which are the following: The design of the biblical writings is directed toward moral and religious ends, and its writers look upon the phenomena of nature almost wholly from

the moral and religious rather than the scientific point of view. Moreover, the Hebrews shared the same ignorance of the methods, conceptions, and conclusions of modern physical science which characterized all the ancient Oriental peoples. Nevertheless, the Bible constantly has regard to nature and what happens in her sphere from its own point of view.

It is almost inevitable, therefore, that if the authority of the Bible is extended so as to cover matters dealt with by the sciences of nature, these sciences and the Bible will come into conflict. Such a conflict has in fact been for a long time hotly waged. In it the combatants have been led to so great lengths that one party (the students of the natural sciences) has sometimes been ready to reject the teachings of sacred Scripture throughout on account of its irreconcilability with their own conclusions concerning nature; and the other party (the theologians) has not hesitated to controvert the most certain of scientific conclusions in the effort to save the authority, on these points, of the biblical writers.

The study of few subjects is so instructive as the study of the history of biblical interpretation. At first, even the fundamental principles of the modern theory of the solar system, even the movement of the earth around the sun, the distance of the fixed stars, etc., were stoutly denied in the supposed interests of the inspiration of the Bible. Now, however, the principal conclusions of natural science on all these matters are accepted without hesitation. Yet the effort is still made to show (alas! how often with much

violence and excess of subtlety toward the sacred text) that the inspired writings may possibly be reconciled with these conclusions. As though the question were, whether these writings may not *possibly* be made to accord with geology, instead of how they are *actually* to be understood when studied in the light of the circumstances amidst which they arose.

It must also be remembered that no claim of the Bible itself can be urged in behalf of attributing infallibility, or indeed any unusual freedom from error, to the views of the biblical writers upon matters of natural science. We are not to expect from these writers the accurate description and knowledge of nature as modern science secures it—and this, not because God could not have imparted this knowledge had He chosen so to do, but because there is no good ground for holding that He would have imparted it; as well as also because there are good grounds for knowing that He did not impart it.

The doctrine of God as the creator of the universe is a religious and a biblical doctrine. Physical science furnishes no reasons for denying this doctrine; on the contrary, physical science leads up to and enriches it. The metaphysical truth of an original divine creation of the world out of nothing does not, however, appear in those writings which bear the name of Moses. Indications of such a view are found here and there in the Old Testament. It is not, indeed, expressly taught by the words of Job (xxvi. 7), "He stretcheth out the north over empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing"; but it gives shape to the declaration in

Hebrews (xi. 3), "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear." Everywhere in the Bible the more positive and religious doctrine of creation, which derives all things from the wise and loving will of God, is clearly implied. The "word," or manifested will of God, rules and creates: He has only to speak, and it is done; to command, and His wish is executed.

But the Bible does not limit the creative acts of God to the calling into original existence of the world's substances, forces, and laws. Modern physical science tries, of course, to understand the world and all its happenings and development as a mere mechanism, in which the actors are the atoms where the so-called forces or modifications of the one universally-diffused energy reside. It has a right to persist in this effort, for this is the business of physical science as such. But the biblical view of God and nature is far different from this: it regards God as the ever-present author and indwelling life of all those structures and events which we call natural. In this, we repeat, the Bible is grandly right, profoundly wise and true.

In certain cases the biblical writers take the point of view which our ordinary experience assumes, and thus speak of nature as though she were a self-sustained system of beings and forces. For example, the grass is spoken of (2 Samuel xxiii. 4) as growing by sunshine and rain; the defeat or victory of armies is ascribed to the relation of the armament to the ground on which the battle is fought or to the strength of the

contending forces. But the writers of the Bible almost uniformly tend to take the other and *super*natural point of view. A man indeed begets and nourishes his children, but God is the author and preserver of all life.

More particularly still, the Bible teaches that it is the Holy Spirit of Jehovah which makes and makes alive, and which informs the world of things and the world of men.* This Spirit, the moving force of God's own life, is the inner spring of the being of all that lives. In Job it is represented as adorning the heavens with stars (xxvi. 13) and as imparting breath to man (xxxiii. 4). In accordance with the same teaching, the bestowal of children is regarded throughout the Old Testament as due to a divine volition. Moreover, the removal of this Spirit by the will of Jehovah is death; for the allotment to every soul of the time of its beginning and end is an act of God. All nature, but especially all living beings, are inspired by the One Divine Life.

In general, God is conceived of in the Old Testament as wearing the physical world like a garment. What modern science considers as the processes of nature the Hebrew Bible regards as the actions of Jehovah; the entire Psalm civ., with its beautiful descriptions of physical phenomena, is composed from this moral and religious—this supernaturalistic—point of view. What modern science considers as the laws of nature the ancient sacred writers regard as a direct expression of the divine power and wisdom. The world is all the immediate and obvious display of

* D. S. S., i , p. 240 f.

God's omnipotence and freedom in justice and grace. He supplies food to man and beast, for He gives rain and fruitful seasons; nor are declarations like these to be understood as merely poetic, for they occur in history and prophecy. The same view enters into the ordinances of the law. For heaven and earth, the visible and the invisible, the natural and the supernatural, are not to be placed at opposite poles of being, with God absent from one and present only in the other; they will together be made *new* under the action of the same moral and religious forces and ideas. Hence we find that *the most intense monotheistic supernaturalism controls all the biblical descriptions of nature.*

The effects and influences of natural events upon man are all regarded by the Old Testament from the same point of view. The plague, the locusts, the unsuccessful battle, are visitations of Jehovah to afflict the people for their sins. Heat, drought, cold, and moisture are not merely physical events, but discipline applied by the Lord for accomplishing some moral and religious purpose which lies near at hand. Especially is it true that the whole world of natural occurrences, as well as the developments of history, are to be regarded in the light of the covenant which Jehovah has made with Israel. Of this covenant sun, moon, and stars, rain, frost, flood, and lightning, foreign kings and their concubines, and generals with their warriors, are divinely made to be the servants and executors.

The foregoing elements of the biblical doctrine of nature are distinctively moral and religious. In strong contrast with their moral elevation and permanent

religious value stand the somewhat crude notions which the earlier biblical writers display as to the facts of external nature, and as to the existence and interaction of natural causes. Throughout the Old Testament the phenomena of the earth and sky are conceived of in the most primitive fashion; to interpret the language in which these conceptions are expressed in any mystical or evasive fashion is as unjustifiable in the case of the sacred writers as it would be in the case of other contemporaneous writers among nations of no more scientific culture than the Hebrews had. "Science," indeed, as we now understand the term, never had any existence among the Hebrews in Old-Testament times. The popular belief that the sky is a solid expanse was embodied in the very name for the sky; this belief among the Hebrews corresponded to that among the Greeks as found expressed in Homer and Pindar.* The sky was early supposed to be set upon the mountains as upon supporting pillars, and to contain openings like doors or windows. Above this "firmament" was an inexhaustible supply of water. Yet in later times the true state of the case as to the nature of the rain, and as to the suspending of the earth without visible support, was not unknown among the Hebrews.

The same primitive and unscientific character belongs to those classifications of the animals and descriptions of natural phenomena which are found in the Mosaic cosmogony, in the narrative of the Deluge, and in the Mosaic law. The purpose of the writers is to serve certain ends of national morality and religion rather

* D. S. S., i., p. 250 f.

than of scientific development. There is not an atom of evidence to show that they had any other information concerning the truths of nature than such as belonged to all their contemporaries.

Were the writers of the Bible divinely kept from making mistakes upon matters of physical science? Nothing but an examination of the writings themselves —an examination both thorough and unprejudiced—can answer a question like this. Such an examination leads to a negative conclusion. The biblical writers show no signs of having been inspired so as to be errorless when treating of physical matters; they make the mistakes incident to their times. Their inspiration, that is to say, is not one which reaches to the details of science and renders them infallible here. It imparts to them no infallible knowledge of the nature and order of secondary causes, of the collocation and inner sources and necessary consequences of physical phenomena—in brief, of all that outfit of mechanism with which the modern sciences of nature deal. The biblical writers know no more than others of the order, laws, and resultants of physical causes; but they know that Jehovah is the Creator and Lord of the world, and that all things execute His will in righteousness and grace toward Israel, the people of the covenant, and toward the inhabitants of the whole earth.

The foregoing general statement of the relation between the views of the biblical writers and the conclusions of modern physical science admits of varied illustration; the best particular example of it is the so-called Mosaic cosmogony, or narrative of the creation as

given in Genesis i. 1—ii. 3.* The discussion of this cosmogony began as early as the attempt to establish the Copernican theory of the solar system. It was at first forced on through the effort of the current theology to restrict or denounce the Copernican theory as destructive of faith in the inspiration and infallibility of sacred Scripture. It has now become a comparatively mild debate as to how far geology and Genesis can be reconciled. In all such debate the main conclusions of geology are usually not for a moment questioned by the disputing parties; the inquiry is simply raised and argued as to how far Genesis may be interpreted so as to accord with these conclusions. Recently, discussion has been renewed from the more modern point of view, with Mr. Gladstone and a very few distinguished students of natural science on one side and the great majority of trained interpreters of the Old Testament as well as of students of natural science upon the other side.

That the narrative of how God made the world, as given by the writer of the first chapter of Genesis, is a masterpiece of literature, ancient in origin and noble in style, there can be no reasonable doubt. Its high literary quality has been praised at length by writers like Herder and Jean Paul Richter. Moreover, since modern researches into the records of surrounding nations have brought to light their corresponding narratives of the process by which the world came into being, the moral and religious, as well as the literary and scientific, superiority of the Hebrew cosmogony to

* D. S. S., i., p. 253 f.

the cosmogonies of other very ancient peoples has become even more obvious. Such superiority, however, is entirely due to the purifying influence of those views concerning the true relations of God and the world to which reference has already been made. The strictly scientific quality of the narrative, however, is wholly on a par with that of all the minds of the nation which enjoyed this same moral and spiritual illumining. The narrative of the creation, in Genesis, is *theocratic literature:* it is in no respect to be considered as an errorless revelation of the scientific details of natural processes.

The most important elements of moral and religious teaching in the biblical account of creation are the following: The world depends for its existence and present order upon the will of God; the divine power and wisdom are manifested in the divine work of preparing its physical substances, of making its living creatures, and especially of forming man in the image of the Maker of all; and these qualities of power and wisdom penetrate every detail of creation. The doctrine that all things, even the original materials out of which the heavens and the earth are constructed, are the product of the divine will is, indeed, implied rather than expressed in the Mosaic cosmogony. But it is unmistakably implied. The perfectness of God's wisdom is also shown by the fact that every work of creation, when inspected, is pronounced wholly "good."

It would be a mistake, then, to suppose that *six entire days* are taken for creation because God needs time in order that His will and wisdom may reach

their result. To the Hebrew mind the majesty of Jehovah consists in His having His will done without any intervening time. Of the long geological periods, and slow, involved processes, and patient, everlasting evolution of results by building one stage upon the preceding stage, which modern physical science emphasizes, the Hebrew mind had not the least conception as a necessity or fact of creation. It is divine to speak and have the word at once accomplished. The six days of creation are none of them to be regarded as in any sense *filled up* with the divine work. To think of Jehovah as busy all day long in getting accomplished the task appropriate to each period would doubtless have seemed to the sacred writer degrading to His majesty.

That creation is made by the author of Genesis to extend through six days, or indeed through any length of time, is the result of another religious doctrine—namely, that of the divine institution of the Jewish Sabbath. That creation, in itself considered, should last precisely *six* days was not a tenet esteemed important by the Jews themselves. We have, immediately following this account, another narrative of creation which gives a very different order to the divine procedure and which says nothing whatever of any six days or periods of time. So in Job (xxxviii. 4–7) it is implied that the stars were made *before* instead of (as here in Genesis) after the founding of the earth.*

* Compare Proverbs viii. 24 f.; Psalm xxiv. 2; Psalm civ. Job xxvi. 7–10; and see D. S. S., i., p. 257 f.

It was the divine institution of the Mosaic Sabbath which gave its distinctive shape to the cosmogony of Genesis. A careful study of the narrative in the light of the history and antiquities of the time at which it probably originated proves the truth of this statement. The division of time into weeks, or periods of seven days, existed for an indefinitely long time before the narrative originated; the division is based upon a universal and natural order. A tradition of creation, more or less like those possessed by other surrounding nations, existed among the Hebrews long previous to this account. The chaos of which Genesis speaks, with its mass of water and brooding darkness, has its counterpart in all these cosmogonies. Six days or creative acts are found in several of them, from China in the East to the Etruscans in the West; and these creative acts have essentially the same order as that followed in Genesis. Man is without exception rated as the last creature; most of the traditions recognize his formation from the soil, and some of them also recognize the formation of woman from one of man's bodily members. In no one of such features, then, can the Hebrew narrative be said to be especially authentic or inspired; in none of them is it peculiar.

The narrative of Genesis, in substantially its present form but upon a basis of traditions of long standing, probably originated at about the same time with, or soon after, the institution of the Sabbath feast as a national sacred ordinance. Eight or more great creative acts appear to have been found by the writer already existing in the current tradition; for at least

eight creative acts are gathered up by him and put into the six creative days. The entire narrative culminates in the words, "And God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it."

The coincidences of the biblical view of the order of creation with the conclusions of modern science are the direct result of the fact that the writer carried out the moral and religious teaching, with which he had been inspired, in accordance with the views of nature current in his own time. In other words, every act of creation is placed by the Mosaic cosmogony in the order in which it would naturally be placed by a devout Hebrew of that age. The author regarded one God as the creator of all, and man as His spiritual child, capable of coming into covenant relations with Him on the basis of certain divinely commanded institutions and ordinances. Hence his narrative is also free from those monstrous conceptions as to the divine procedure in producing the world, and as to the relations in which divinity stands to this world, that are found in most other ancient cosmogonies.

Moreover, as a natural deduction from its religious teaching, Genesis gives to man his true position in the universe, at the head of creation—last, indeed, in time, but first in excellence, and sharing in both the natural and the divine. In the same way is man regarded as the centre of creation. Sun, moon, and stars are created *for him*, to rule the day and night for him, and to give him light. From the point of view which is held, properly enough for its own purposes, by physical science, this estimate of man is greatly

exaggerated. But from the biblical point of view, and with the purposes which its teaching is designed to secure, such an estimate is correct and indispensable. It accords also with the conclusions of a sound philosophy which, like the Bible, lays emphasis upon what is rational, spiritual, and divine in man, rather than chiefly upon his physical organism and connections.

The character of its religious teaching also explains the fact that the narrative of Genesis agrees with modern physical science in regarding the different substances and beings of which the world is composed as originating in an orderly and progressive way. The Bible directly infers this truth from the wisdom of God as accounting for the grades of existences with which experience makes us acquainted. Physical science discovers the same truth in detail by the most extended and painstaking researches. But the biblical account plainly involves no information concerning that costly and immense conflict among the forms of animal life, and concerning those countless ages of growth and increase, succeeded by ruin and comparative chaos, which the modern science of geology has brought to view.

Under the influences of true religious belief combined with faulty scientific information the author of this cosmogony obviously had some such picture of creation as the following before his mind: The formation of the present constitution of things he, like his contemporaries, thought of as beginning in a dark and watery chaos. God then first of all summons light into being—*light*, which is regarded as something really

existing and the condition of all other existences, as well as of the knowledge of what is afterward to go on in the process of making the world ready for man. The watery mass which was before undivided, after it is illumined by the newly created light, is separated by another word of God, and its two parts are fixed separate by the firm and pellucid expanse of the sky. As the heavens had been divided off from the earth by a divine act, so now by another divine act the earth is divided from the sea by collecting together the waters into one place; and thus the dry land, or earth in the more restricted meaning of the word, is prepared for bringing forth every kind of vegetable life. And now the light, which has hitherto been conceived of as a substance everywhere equally diffused, is also collected and stationed in its centres of supply. God had said, "Let there be light"; He now says, "Let there be lights."

The creation of the heavenly bodies on the fourth day, and their separation in this manner from the creation of the light, appears the only real surprise in the order of the Mosaic cosmogony. But considering the conceptions which the author had, and the material which he had to handle, this order is after all not surprising. For how could the heavenly luminaries be created until a firmament was made in which to set them? Moreover, they are regarded as lights *for* the earth and for the animals (especially man) that dwell on the earth. They could not, therefore, be created earlier than the third day. But since eight creative works are to be accomplished in six days of creation (so

that the Sabbatic week may be completed), the two works of making the dry land and of causing it to produce the plants are naturally allotted to the third day. The gathering of the light into its places, accordingly, falls upon the fourth day; and by its arrangement in this way the balance between the two great halves of the creative works—those which a theologian of the Middle Ages called the "works of making a distinction" and the "works of adornment" —is secured.

From the fourth day onward the narrative of Genesis introduces the animal creation upon the earth in an order corresponding to its general plan and to its conception of the relation of the earth to man. Finally, the crowning divine work is reached; in man's creation we have the culmination of the narrative, and the way is, once for all, made ready for all the subsequent history and doctrine of the book in which the narrative occurs.

It is only what we should expect, after making the fullest acknowledgment of the value of the moral and religious teaching of the Mosaic cosmogony, to find that the details of its arrangement differ in several important respects from the conclusions of modern science.* To admit this does not detract at all from the value of this teaching. For example, the narrative of Genesis introduces all the forms of plant-life together in verse 12; all the forms of fishes and birds in verse 20; all the forms of land animals in verse 24 f.; it makes these creatures belong to different, separate periods of time, and to different creative acts. But such a view is quite

* D. S. S., i., p. 261 f.

at variance with the conclusions of modern science. Moreover, the condition in which the world is represented as beginning is very different from that in which science represents it. Genesis speaks of a mass of raging waters; modern science, of a gaseous fluid. How impossible it is to understand by this watery chaos the same state of things which the modern theory demands, we may see by referring to the use made elsewhere of the word with which the Hebrew describes it. Jonah is represented (ii. 5) as being cast into—a "mass of raging waters," and not a gaseous fluid! The Psalmist (xlii. 7) represents one such mass of water as calling to another, when a storm is on the deep—not one gaseous fluid as calling to another!

Nor can modern science admit that all the forms of plant-life, familiar to the author of the Mosaic cosmogony and necessary to the sustenance of man and beast, were created before the existence of sunlight, or that the separation of all plant-life from all animal life (with an entire period or æon thrown in between) represents the real facts of the case.

The immense antiquity of the heavenly bodies, far surpassing that of the present distinction between the sea and land upon the earth's surface, is also one of the firmest conclusions of modern science. We cannot escape this difficulty by considering that the work of the fourth day consisted simply in *making visible* the heavenly bodies which had before been in existence; for the author plainly regards the work of this day as truly *creative* of the heavenly bodies.

Of all the various theories which have been devised

to escape difficulties like the foregoing, not one is at all satisfactory. The theory which clings to the strict literal and historical interpretation of the text of Genesis is, indeed, *exegetically considered*, satisfactory; but it, of course, leaves the real task of reconciliation untouched. This makes it necessary to give some other than the so-called literal interpretation to Genesis, if a complete accord of its statements with accepted scientific truth is to be effected. Hence various hypotheses of reconciliation. Into a detailed account of these hypotheses we cannot enter. There are certain special objections on which each one of them strikes and is broken in pieces. But there is one insuperable objection common to all such hypotheses, and concerning this objection a brief discussion is appropriate at this point.

All the hypotheses of reconciliation require that some provision shall be found in the biblical narrative for those enormously long periods of time, and for that slow and so-called *natural* evolution of one stage from another under the action of physical causes, which modern science demonstrates and emphasizes. The biblical narrative, however, speaks of all things as finished in six days of work, followed by one day which is hallowed as a day of divine rest. Every effort at reconciliation, therefore, involves an understanding of these "days" as though they were enormously long periods of time, which may be filled up with the process of natural evolution. But can the Hebrew word for day be so interpreted? Candor compels us to say that it cannot.

The Hebrew word translated "day" in the cosmogony of Genesis never means, and cannot mean, an in-

definitely long or enormous period of time, such as is absolutely required to constitute one of the geological eras.* For example, when we are told in Psalm xc. (verse 4), that a thousand years are in Jehovah's eyes like the one day of yesterday when it is past, the very force of the comparison depends upon retaining the customary meaning for the word "day." The word is frequently used in Hebrew either to mean the ordinary day of twenty-four hours, with its succession of light and darkness, or to denote indefinitely *the time at which* anything occurs. That the writer of the Mosaic cosmogony did not for a moment conceive of these days as including immense stretches of time filled up with the ongoing evolution of nature, his whole mode of speaking plainly shows. The seventh day, the use of which as a Sabbath he wished to consecrate, is certainly regarded by him as an ordinary day. The formula, "there was evening and there was morning, one day," corresponds to the Babylonian usage, and to the fact that the first of the divine works was the creation of light; the first whole day, therefore, began with the light closed in by evening, and ended at the expiration of the darkness closed in by morning.

Moreover, what sort of geological periods can be devised that are part day and part night, as the ordinary day is? And if it be said, that there could have been no days until the sun was made, and therefore the days preceding the fifth could not have been ordinary days, the reply is: The whole narrative, and all the information elsewhere derived, shows that the writer had no

* D. S. S., i., p. 266 f.

such conception, as we have, of the succession of day and night being fixed by the movement of the earth in relation to the sun. Until the "lights" were created to *rule* the day and the night, Jehovah without the heavenly bodies made the light come and go so as to round off the days with successive evenings and mornings.

Essentially the same conclusions with regard to the attitude of the early Hebrew writers toward physical facts and laws follow from a study of the narrative of the Deluge in Noah's time.* In this case insuperable difficulties arise only when we try to accept the obvious view of the writer—namely, that the whole earth was submerged at that time, and every living being not preserved in the ark destroyed. But the difficulties in the main disappear when we regard the narrative as the tradition of a wide-spread but comparatively local flood. Its wider interest arises from the fact that its occurrence and results are connected with Jehovah's dealings with His covenant people for purposes of moral and religious instruction. Everything about the narrative shows that its author held only the prevalent conceptions of his time as to the physical conditions of such a deluge as he describes.

Jehovah, we are told in this narrative, opens the windows of heaven and lets down the rain; He also breaks up the fountains of the great deep and lets the flood burst forth from the earth. But, obviously, the writer knew nothing of what would be involved in so great a geologic change in the crust of the earth. For the process of putting everything to rights, as he

* D. S. S., i., p. 272 f.

conceives of it, requires only a few months; and when the earth dries off, the mountains and hills stand in their accustomed places, and a freshly plucked olive-leaf is found at no great distance from the ark. Moreover, it takes less than twice the time required for the water to subside fifteen cubits, for it further to subside so as to leave the entire earth dry. Very high mountains, therefore, could not have been known to the writer. To insist upon the scientific accuracy of the views as to the construction and processes of nature held by the narrative of the Deluge in the days of Noah requires us to assume a series of the most stupendous miracles. Only miraculously could the animals have been collected by this patriarch; only miraculously could they have been accommodated and cared for in the ark; only miraculously could the damage to the geological order have been repaired, etc., etc. And these miracles are in the spheres of meteorology, physical geography, biology, and even astronomy—in other words, in just those spheres in which they are to be admitted only when the evidence is of the highest order. Nor are they contemplated by the biblical narrative itself.

The same course recommends itself, therefore, to the devout biblical student, when he considers the narrative which Genesis gives of a universal deluge, as that which we have seen he should follow when considering its narrative of creation. The moral and religious doctrine and bearings of the narrative should be recognized without the painful feeling that the trustworthiness and inspiration of the Hebrew Bible must be vin-

dicated by showing the scientific infallibility of the Hebrew writer.

It is obviously unnecessary to consider in detail the possibility of reconciling the views of the Old Testament regarding the origin, unity, and antiquity of the human race with those so confidently held on these subjects by many students of natural science.* But upon these subjects, in general, one important observation should be made. With all its boasting and parade, natural science has here, in fact, little real and verifiable —not to say conclusive—information to give. Natural science cannot tell us how the human species originated; it is not likely that it will ever be able to do this in any such way as to command the assent of all reasonable students of the problem. All of its devotees should be candid enough to admit what some of the wisest of them do not hesitate to say, when asked as to how man came to be, as now, on the face of the earth;—"We do not know."

Nor can natural science tell us whether the different races of men have sprung from one pair or not. As to the genealogical unity of the human species, it cannot say. But anthropology and psychology alike unite in telling us that, both in bodily and in mental characteristics, all men are now *one species;* nay, more, that they are entitled to be set apart from all other animals as separated by a great gulf from them; and are bound among themselves into the unity of a genus incomparable, in certain respects, with the other genera of the animal kingdom.

* D. S. S., i., p. 275 f.

As to the antiquity of man, however, the natural sciences, although they can as yet give no definite opinion, are entitled to hold that neither the ordinary chronology, nor any other chronology, as derived from biblical data, gives sufficient room for that progress which such sciences can show has actually been made by man upon the earth.

In closing this chapter it is proper reverently to weigh certain considerations which help to vindicate the divine wisdom in not so inspiring the writers of sacred Scripture as to free them from all erroneous conceptions and mistaken statements on matters pertaining to physical and natural science. It would indeed be far better if all students of the Bible would approach it without having their minds prejudiced in judgment as to what God must do in order to be "wise" in His way of giving the Bible to mankind. Who will undertake to say how God *must* make, or cause to be made by His inspired servants, a circuit of canonical writings like that contained in the Old and New Testaments?

But, certainly, it is not difficult to find reasons why God should not render the writers of sacred Scripture infallible with respect to physical facts and laws. The original design of the Mosaic cosmogony, for example, was to found the Jewish Sabbath as a divine institution connected with the covenant relations between Jehovah and the nation. If its design had been to furnish a scientific theory of evolution, the construction of this cosmogony would have been entirely different. But how inferior, in respect to all which the Bible aims to accom-

plish, would the latter purpose have been as compared with the former; indeed, we may say how difficult or even impossible of accomplishment! By this we do not mean simply that the ancient Hebrews did not need to know, and could not have been made to comprehend, the facts and laws of nature as they are taken account of by modern physical theories. We mean also to affirm that if the form of their moral and religious teaching had been made such as to comport with these modern theories, it would have been robbed of much of its effectiveness over the minds of that age. The very essence of the modern theories is the principle that the world came into its present condition as the result of the evolution of natural causes working through enormously long periods of time. The very essence of the biblical teaching is the doctrine that God is in the world with His spiritual presence, and that He needs neither time nor agencies existing outside Himself to bring to pass the things that are. These two truths or sets of truths are not, indeed, incompatible. But it has required centuries of discussion and progress in scientific and philosophical inquiry, as well as in biblical study, to see that they are not incompatible. And even now, and after all, it is only a few of the choicest and most devout spirits who can keep the religious awe before the immediateness of God's creative power and wisdom in close union with the scientific knowledge that the world of existing substances and forces has been evolved, through countless ages of time, in accordance with natural laws.

Could it be expected, then, that the crude and untrained mind of the Hebrews to whom God began long

ago to make Himself known as their Redeemer (crude and untrained then both in religion and in science) could have received the religious doctrine if this doctrine had been taught even in a form compatible with the scientific theory? God was then getting this tough and low-minded people started in the most primitive things of true religion. He took them as children; He bore with them as with children; He spake to them as to children. It is a small and insignificant thing from the truly religious point of view that, while He made them alone of all ancient peoples, by a gradual revelation, to know Him as the true God and to expect His Messiah, He did not also provide them with historians and prophets who could, either cunningly or unwittingly, guard themselves against saying anything irreconcilable with the most advanced modern theory of geological and biological evolution.

Let this chapter close, then, with the affirmation of the same principles to which attention was called at the beginning. As it was once wittily said by a Catholic theologian: "The Bible is to teach us how to go to heaven and not how the heavens go." It assumes the great moral and religious truth that God, with His will and wisdom and spiritual presence, is immanent everywhere in the nature which physical science regards as a mechanism of measurable forces acting on each other under unchanging laws. This moral and religious view of nature is profoundly true. It needed to be brought to man at the first in the most simple and childlike forms of representation. This need was met by the Hebrew Scriptures.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE.

THERE is another class of claims for the biblical writers with which many students of the modern sciences of nature are often found in sharp and strenuous conflict. Every candid reader of the Old and New Testaments can see that many occurrences are recorded in them, which are not merely *supernatural* as implying the universal divine presence in what we call natural events, but which are supernatural as implying this presence in some special and notable way. Such occurrences are customarily called "miracles." But modern physical science strongly induces many of its devotees to disbelieve in miracles, while it cultivates in all of them far more of scepticism toward the evidence for miracles than was prevalent in biblical times.

The devout Christian believer, however, cannot regard the modern conflict over the very existence of the biblical miracles as an unimportant one. This conflict is, indeed, much more important than any conflict over the strict scientific accuracy of the Noachian Deluge or the Mosaic cosmogony.

Indeed, the doctrine of miracles is a tenet over which the most intelligent and liberal-minded defenders of the Christian faith have always felt it necessary to contend —if need be, as in a life-and-death struggle. Nor does this tenet appear any less essential now, in the face of

the more modern scientific way of looking at nature as a mechanism of imperishable substances and energies interacting under unchanging law, than it appeared two thousand years ago.

Certain considerations of another order must, however, at once be added in explanation of what has just been said. There can be no doubt that the theology of two or more centuries since greatly increased the difficulty felt by candid minds in accepting the biblical miracles. This it did by drawing fixed lines of separation between the natural and the supernatural, by banishing God from the world of ordinary experience, and by separating the conception of a miracle too much from the ordinary intent and methods of the divine wisdom and grace. Now to deny the justness of such a *theological conception* of the biblical miracles is a very different thing from denying the *miracles themselves*.

We need, then, first of all, to inquire as to what is the true conception of a miracle. And in beginning our answer to this question we appeal to the Bible itself. It must be remembered, however, that the Bible is a large collection of originally separate books which were composed by different authors, under different circumstances, and at widely separated intervals of time. It is, therefore, not unlikely that a development of view will be discovered in the biblical books, upon this as upon other subjects. Certainly the Christian point of standing will here be, in some important respects, different from that of the Old-Testament saints. To the Christian, Christ is Himself—in His person, incarnation, life, resurrection, and spiritual

presence—the one great and essential miraculous reality. All else which puts forth a claim to be of a miraculous character is to be regarded from the point of view furnished by faith in Christ.

In attempting a work of Christian apologetics, like that upon which we are to enter, several distinctions are important to be made. We must distinguish between accepting the biblical doctrine of miracles and of the place they have in true religion, and holding that every narrative of a miraculous event is undoubtedly true simply because it occurs in the biblical writings. A narrative of a miraculous event is precisely like a narrative of any other event. A miracle, if it occur, is something that men become aware of, as they become aware of other events—either by the evidence of their own senses or by the testimony of others. The record of every miracle is, therefore, an historical affair. It must be tested by the rules by which we judge of all history. If it should seem that any of the biblical narratives of miracles—for example, of the miraculous quenching of the thirst of Samson, or of the standing still of the sun at Joshua's command—have not sufficient historical evidence to secure them against doubt on such grounds, this would by no means overthrow or necessarily weaken the biblical doctrine of miracles in general. It would not even necessarily detract from the value of the evidence in favor of some other miracle—for example, the resurrection of our Lord, or some one of His many miraculous acts.

Moreover, a distinction must be made among the biblical miracles with respect to the relation in which

they stand to the truths of Christianity and of biblical religion. Some of these miracles are, as such, integral and almost (if not quite) vital parts of Christianity; others of them are only remotely connected with the truths of Christianity; others, still, are even wholly unconnected with it, unless we regard the bare fact that mention of them is made in some Old-Testament writing as constituting such a connection. Each miracle may, therefore, properly be regarded as a special case requiring a special examination; such examination will consider the connection of each miracle with the truths of biblical religion, as well as the amount of historical testimony which it has in its favor.

What, then, is the true conception of the biblical miracle as set forth by the biblical writers themselves? A miracle is a species of the supernatural; it is a particular kind, or mode, of the manifestation of Himself which God makes, in external nature, to the mind of man. Such revelation implies, then, that something takes place by the act of God, outside of the human mind, which is designed and adapted to make the divine nature and work known to man. But it also implies that a spiritual process, of apprehending the meaning of what thus takes place externally, goes on in the mind itself. Thus much is true of all the divine self-disclosure. "Revelation" cannot be a mechanical process; it cannot be a kind of carrying over ready-made the truths of one mind to the mind of another.

But the biblical miracles are designed to accomplish a special kind of revelation. One characteristic of all miracles is that they are events obvious to the senses

A miracle is therefore something that happens in the sphere which we call "nature," in the sphere which we regard from the modern point of view as under the reign of physical laws. But the question now arises: In what respect do miraculous events in nature differ from ordinary events there; or from extraordinary events, like flood, pestilence, storm, etc., for the occurrence of which ignorant men find it difficult to assign a so-called natural explanation?

The view which the theologians of the ancient Church took of the biblical miracles, so far as they speculated upon the nature and method of the miracle in general, was similar to that of the biblical writers. One form at least of the doctrine of Augustine held that all events in nature are in a certain sense miraculous, as all being alike the work of God;* and, on the other hand, all events are alike natural. According to Thomas Aquinas, too—the great theologian of the Middle Ages—those things are called miracles which are done by God *beyond* the order of nature, or beyond the causes "known to us." But that same *post*-Reformation theology, which we found insisting on the most unnatural theory of the inspiration of the Bible, was satisfied neither with the biblical nor with the earlier theological view of miracles. It thought to glorify the occasional action of God in nature, for purposes of revealing His wisdom and power, by calling every biblical miracle a "violation" of natural laws. Now, no theory of a miracle could well be more truly unphilosophical and even irreligious than this. For-

* D. S. S., i., p. 293.

tunately, during the last half century, this conception of the miracle has been almost wholly abandoned.

The biblical miracles are not to be regarded as violations or even suspensions of the laws of nature. From the biblical as well as from the truly philosophical point of view, the "laws of nature" are themselves only the orderly and wise modes of the operation of the divine will. But God does not, of course, violate Himself or the methods of His own rational and gracious behavior. If in an emergency (as it were, and to speak humanly) His mode of operation is different from that ordinarily followed, this is not a violation of nature. If He so connects together a system of extraordinary occurrences in the realm of visible and tangible events as to make them show forth His character—for example, as the system of biblical miracles shows God forth as the Redeemer of mankind—this is not to be spoken of as though the divine will did an occasional violence to the world of physical substances, forces, and laws. The truth is that this false theory of the miracle is itself a product of the very same way of regarding the relation between God and the world as that adopted by the Deism which the theory tried to controvert.

Not a few of the biblical miracles merely represent themselves as what we should now call extraordinary combinations or exaggerations of ordinary physical forces.* The Flood, the plagues of Egypt, the deliverance at the Red Sea, and probably many of the miraculous healings of the Bible belong to this class. These events are regarded by the biblical writers as miracu-

* D. S. S., i., p. 302.

ous, not because they must be regarded by us as violations or suspensions of nature's laws, but because they are notable events, are to be ascribed to the divine free-will, and are factors in the self-revelation of God.

Still further, the Bible never represents its miraculous occurrences as though they came about in an absolutely supernatural or wholly arbitrary way. Even miracles are always limited by conditions derived from nature. Indeed, miracles, in order to be miracles at all, must be *in* nature and, to a certain extent, *of* nature. For example, the bread with which our Lord feeds the multitudes is represented as actual bread, and doubtless had all the qualities and effects of such food; the wine He made was actual wine, and is represented as having its physical basis, so to speak, in the water that was turned into the wine. Whatever happens *in* nature—and it is of the very essence of a miracle to happen in the natural sphere and so make an appeal to the mind through the senses—takes its place there in accordance with the conditions furnished by the existing substances, forces, and laws of nature; and this is as true of that which, like the miracle, cannot be conceived of as originating wholly out of these substances, forces, and laws, as it is of all ordinary so-called natural occurrences.

Now, if we examine the conception of the miracle which seems to be required by the teaching of both the Old and the New Testaments, we find that it includes three elements.* It is implied, in the first place, that a miracle is *not* an event of ordinary experience; secondly, that it *is* the product of God's immediate pres-

* D. S. S., i., p. 301.

ence and activity; thirdly, that it is a *sign*, proof, or reminder to men which has a moral and religious significance. The most important and most strongly attested of the biblical miracles are factors or parts, as it were, in that system of divine self-revelation which it is the chief function of the Bible to record, perpetuate, explain, and apply. It is largely for this reason that these miracles stand, in both character and evidence, so much above all the alleged miracles with which the history of the ancient and mediæval Church, as well as the tales of Oriental peoples generally, are filled.

The titles by which the biblical miracles are called in the biblical writings do not, of themselves, signify much more than that these events are unaccustomed and notable or astonishing. The Old Testament has, in fact, no name for a miracle that is not just as readily applicable to events which all men would now call "natural," but which are, at the same time, capable of being regarded by pious minds as providential occurrences. For example, miracles are customarily called "signs." But the ordinary processes of nature are themselves also ascribed directly to God as great and marvellous things. Symbolical transactions and symbolical persons are called signs in apparently the same way as miracles. Even the word "prodigy" or "wonder" is not restricted to the miracle. The prophet Isaiah speaks of himself and the children whom Jehovah had given him as being "for signs and portents" to Israel.*

The foregoing titles, therefore, do not emphasize any

* Deut. xxviii. 46; Isa. vii. 14, viii. 18, xx. 3, xxxvii. 30, and D. S. S., i. p. 302 f.

new relation in which the miracle stands to God as compared with those providential events which He brings about naturally in the administration of His kingdom—like plagues and floods, and wars, for example. They rather set the miracle apart from ordinary experience as something extraordinary, separate, and distinguished, as a great deed, an expression of unusual power, or as calculated to inspire terror. One of the words used in the New Testament for the miracle denotes the same characteristics. Thus we read in Mark vi. 2, of the astonishment of the people at the "mighty works" of Jesus; and in Matthew xxiv. 24, of the "great signs and wonders" which the false prophets will show; and in Acts v. 12, of the many "signs and wonders" wrought among the people by the hands of the apostles.

The biblical teaching as to the nature and office of its miracles, moreover, ascribes them to the divine free-will. They are due to the *power* of God; they are "works" of God. For example, in the miraculous visitation with death by being swallowed up in the ground, which Korah, Dathan, and Abiram suffered (see Numbers xvi. 28 f.), Jehovah is represented as "making a new thing" (or "creating a creation," see margin of the new version); nor would the Old-Testament point of view be in the least changed by the discovery that these seditious persons perished in an earthquake. The really important truth upon which the Bible insists is this, that *these events happen by the direct will of God.* The New-Testament miracles, too, are constantly represented as events due to the "power of God"; by this same power Jesus was raised

from the dead, and all believers will also be raised. Christ himself tells us (Luke xi. 20) that His own miracles are wrought by the "finger of God."

Closely connected with the foregoing truth stands another; the Bible, as a rule, presents its most important miracles, its divine wonders, in the connections which they actually sustain to an historical process of divine self-revelation. That is to say, throughout the Scriptures God is represented as making Himself known to men as their Redeemer. That He is indeed their redeemer, and how He will be their redeemer, and what they are to do and be in order to be redeemed by Him—all this becomes more and more evident as age after age preceding the coming of Christ passes by. But all this is finally brought into the clear light when Christ is fully come. Now, the biblical miracles are factors or elements in this process of revelation—they are so, at least, as a rule. That certain narratives of wonders which seem to have no connection with this process of revealing God as the Redeemer of mankind do occur in the Old Testament, we are not prepared to deny. Some miracles are there narrated which appear more like the magic and "thaumaturgy" of which we find so much in all ancient religions. Such miracles can never claim the same evidence for themselves as that which belongs to the miracles that appear as *organically connected*, so to speak, with the process of divine revelation.

The biblical miracles have therefore a moral significance and sustain relations of the greatest interest and value to the development of the kingdom of God.

They are *for an end*, and that end is to make the divine holiness and grace known to all men, in an effective way. This is the so-called "teleology" of the miracle. This is the purpose indicated, as served, by the title "sign" which the biblical writers so often apply to the miracles they record. For this reason also errors of faith and errors of life prevent men who indulge in them from being convinced by miracles; and they also detract from the convincing force of the wonders sometimes wrought by evil teachers.* For the same reason no one is to allow himself to be convinced by wonders of whatever character against the true teaching of the Gospel. For miracles are not "signs" which prove that the men who work them must be listened to at all hazards; they are signs of the divine truth to such as know how to interpret them. Those who claim to work miracles in the name of Christ are not even to be listened to when they also work iniquity.

The New Testament plainly regards the office of the miracle as unfulfilled unless it has some influence upon *human character*. Faith in miracles is of little worth unless it become faith in Christ. Miracles call upon those who witness them to repent and give thanks to God. The Pharisees committed a far greater sin in admitting that Jesus cast out devils miraculously, and then ascribing this influence to the prince of devils, than they would have committed in disbelieving the evidence that He cast out devils at all. Jesus repeatedly refuses to lend His power to produce miracles as

*D. S. S., i., p. 306 f.

mere wonders or spectacles. His miracles are rather all to be regarded as "tokens" or "symbols" from which to draw conclusions as to the nature of His Messianic work; they may therefore be considered as a witness to the divine character of that work.

The biblical miracles are, therefore, never to be regarded as occasional violations or suspensions of an order of nature which, during the period between these violations or suspensions, goes on in comparative independence of God by the play of its own forces under its own laws. God is as much and as truly in nature, and over nature, at one time as at another; when the grain ripens in the sunshine, as well as when the water becomes wine; when the dead body falls into the decay natural to it, as truly as when it is made to live again at the word of the Lord of life. No laws or forces have an existence outside of God, or apart from God, that can be overturned when a biblical miracle is wrought.

And now the question arises, whether events like those which the Bible narrates among its miracles can actually occur. This question will probably be answered by each inquirer according to the attitude which he assumes, in mind, heart, and will, toward biblical religion. Suppose a thoughtful mind fully to believe in God, not simply as a remote possibility, or merely as a creator who, countless ages ago, started the first things of nature and has since left them alone, —suppose God to be believed in as a living God, ever manifest and immanent in nature, as the Bible teaches that He is. Suppose the faith also to be held that God

has made a revelation of Himself, in a special way, as the Redeemer and Saviour of man from sin. Suppose the conviction to be gained that the biblical religion is such a revelation, and that the Christ of the New Testament is the full and final manifestation of God in this way. Then the mind believing these things will see a probability and fitness in the divine use of natural events and objects to make God thus known to men. Nay, more: then the mind will regard Christ himself, His being, personality, work, death, and resurrection, as the great and central miracle of this whole process of divine self-revelation.

The historical probability and the scientific probability of the biblical miracles depend largely, therefore, upon the general attitude of mind with which the question is approached. Even in times when the plentiful existence of miracles was almost unquestioned, they could not of themselves produce faith. Nor was it ever expected that the mere exciting of wonder should bring men into the right apprehension of the truth. Nor would the essential value of the biblical miracles and the office they serve be destroyed if the time should come when investigation should discover *how* these miracles came about. For the person in the right attitude toward God, *He* is no farther away when His presence and working are hidden; and no less near when man gets some clearer glimpses of the methods of this presence and working.

In considering the evidence for the biblical miracles we should begin where it is fullest and strongest. Let it not be forgotten, however, that it is necessary to

establish the truthfulness of each of these narratives on grounds that are valid for each, and according to the rules of historical inquiry.

Did Jesus claim to work miracles? It is to this question that we need first of all briefly to attend, since the moral integrity and freedom from self-deceit of his divine Lord are fundamental tenets of knowledge and faith with the Christian believer. For us, therefore, the trustworthiness of His claims needs no examination.

The history of the Evangelists* represents the people as attracted to Jesus by His abiding gift of working miracles; it represents Him also as accepting the view which the people held concerning the Messianic office He exercised. The argument, for example, which our Lord holds with the Pharisees (Mark iii. 20–30, and the parallel passages), when they accuse Him of casting out devils by the prince of the devils, shows that He claimed to be a worker of miracles. His reply to the disciples of John (Matt. xi. 2 f.) when they came to inquire whether He were the Messiah or not, contains the same claim, and pledges His moral integrity to this claim. And when word came to Him that Herod was seeking to kill Him, He would have "that fox" told: "I cast out devils and perform cures" (see Luke xiii. 32). There can be no doubt that Jesus claimed to work miracles.

Nor can a truly *miraculous* character be denied to those cures of the sick which our Lord performed almost daily, and to which He referred as a marked token

* D. S. S., i., p. 313 f.

of the truth that He was actually exercising the official functions prophesied of God's Messiah. It is indeed true that modern physiological and medical science has brought to light many wonderful facts concerning the influence of mental conditions and mental excitement over diseases of the body. But it is also true that we know nothing, which can be called by the title of "scientific truth," to account for the miraculous cures ascribed to our Lord in the Gospels. Not only is He represented as curing the maniacal, the paralytic prostrate upon beds, and deaf-mutes, but also those born blind, those leprous, and maimed with permanent and organic changes. He is also represented as healing all diseases alike, and at once; and this, not as a physician, or even as a miracle-monger, but as the Messiah of God. His will accomplishes cures at a distance, and where neither the persons to be cured, nor their friends, know that the cure is to be effected.

The miraculous cures of our Lord, indeed, appear "natural," in the higher sense of the word, as coming from Him; that is to say, they spring forth from His spiritual personality as a fitting expression of what He is, and of His relation to God, to the world, and to men. Hence His power to walk the sea, His transfiguration, and His several appearances after resurrection up to His miraculous disappearance from the sight of His disciples. Nor is the outreaching of this divine Messianic power stopped by the barriers which external things opposed to others. The sea is miraculously stilled; the dead are raised to life; the multitude are fed with miraculously-created bread, or given to drink

of wine miraculously produced from water. It is the Lord's Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of men, who thus shows forth in physical nature, and by His power over physical nature, the divine redeeming holiness and grace.

Now it is not unlikely that the miracles of our Lord sustained an important relation to the development of His own consciousness of His divine sonship and office as Messiah. Just as all human beings have their mental and spiritual powers developed in the contact with and control over physical things, so did this unique being understand what manner of one He was, and what manner of work He was called of God to perform, more fully as His miraculous action continued and enlarged its sphere. That the miracles of Christ had an incalculable effect upon the public manifestation and recognition of His divine nature and mission there can be no doubt.* They expressed to the people His claims to be sent as the Messiah of God; they expressed the divinest qualities of compassion and grace which belonged to His person; they attracted men to Him; they demanded and cultivated faith, and so became a means of grace.

The miracles which the Gospels record are, therefore, such as Christ himself claimed that it was His mission to perform. They are also such as most fittingly follow from the very nature of Christ's personality and of His work upon the earth. They "fittingly follow," that is to say, in the judgment of those who take the biblical and true view of the relation in which

* D. S. S., i., p. 39.

God, the supernatural Presence and Power, stands to all that we call nature, and of the plan which He has wrought out in history for the redemption of mankind.

As to the occurrence, in fact, of the miraculous deeds ascribed to our Lord by the Gospels, we have enough of trustworthy immediate testimony. The testimony to the fact may well be regarded as trustworthy when judged by those standards of judgment that apply to the ascertaining of all historical truth. For it represents the concurrent report of competent eye-witnesses. It has certain features which belong to no other testimony for any other worker of miracles.

A modern critic, by no means of too favorable an attitude toward miracles, says truly that "the picture of Jesus, the worker of miracles, as it is given in its common features by the Evangelists, and so standing in strong contrast with the picture of John the Baptist, belongs to the first believers in Christ, and is no invention." Indeed, if we try to separate the miraculous elements from the Gospel picture, it becomes quite unrecognizable as the picture of Jesus. The Gospel of John, the only gospel written in its present form by the hand of an apostle, represents our Lord as being seen and known by the writer to be a worker of miracles. The Gospel of Matthew, too, although not by the apostle of that name in its present form, yet without doubt contains the view of Christ's work and ministry which was recorded by this apostolic eye-witness of what Jesus did.

The whole evidence for the resurrection, moreover, is evidence to the supernatural personality of Christ

and to the most stupendous central miracle of the New-Testament revelation. Indeed, it may be said, on the one hand, that unless we know Jesus to have been the supernatural person and the worker of miracles which the Gospels agree in representing Him to be, we know little or nothing about Him beyond the mere fact that a man of that name lived and excited considerable interest at about that time among the Jews.

All the evidence, then—both the doctrinal and the historical—concurs in fixing this indestructible centre of the Gospel miracles in connection with the person and work of Christ. We are to start from this firm central truth (both of doctrine and of history) in our work of examining the evidence for the other biblical miracles. The centre remains firm and indestructible whatever may be concluded as to the sufficiency of the evidence for certain miraculous events only very remotely connected with this centre.

The wonderful occurrences narrated in the Old Testament are to be regarded in the light of the relation which they sustain to the entire self-revelation of God as the Redeemer of man, as well as in the light of the kind and amount of historical evidence for themselves which they can usually present. Whatever may be the fate of such Old-Testament narratives, the firm centre of truth about the person and work of Jesus is not in the least disturbed. For example, the questions whether in remote Old-Testament times an ax lost by prophets was, or was not, made to swim; and whether a great hero like Samson did, or did not, possess miraculous strength; and whether the deliverance of Jonah

was, or was not, a real miraculous occurrence—these questions do not *essentially* concern our faith in Christ. It may also be said that they do not even concern essentially our confidence in the Bible or our belief in its genera. credibility.

The distinction must now be made between a miracle and the record of a miracle.* To work a real miracle implies some extraordinary relation of the person working it toward God. The genuine miracles of Scripture are, as a rule, represented as wrought by inspired prophets or messengers of God. The miracles in the Old Testament are represented as mainly grouped about the two great personalities of Moses and Elijah. In the New Testament they are, of course, represented as centred in Christ, although also for a time connected with the work of His apostles in founding His church upon the earth.

The case is sometimes represented by unfriendly critics as though the Hebrew Scriptures "swarmed" with tales of miraculous occurrences of the most irrational kind, and on occasions when there was really no call for them. This representation, however, is not true to the facts. The Hebrew Scriptures do, indeed, consider the presence of God, the supernatural, as constant and immediate in all their history. In this they are highly rational instead of being at all irrational. It is also true that these Scriptures do not draw a hard and fixed line between what is merely supernatural and what is miraculous in the strictest sense. The locusts in Joel's time were as truly a divine visitation of the

*D. S. S., i., p. 338 f.

nation for moral and spiritual ends as were the plagues in the time of Moses in Egypt or in the Desert. Nevertheless, those occurrences in the history of Israel, which even the ancient Hebrews could not have regarded from the natural as well as the supernatural point of view, with the exception of two or three great epochs in that history, are occasional and sporadic. Thus the miracles are made to sustain a very close relation to the work of inspired prophets and messengers of Jehovah in the Old Testament. To work such miracles, then, the worker must be inspired.

But to *record* miracles, of itself, requires no inspiration. Indeed, we might say that cool historical judgment and ability to sift evidence, etc., would the rather be required for the work of making such a record. Nor does the presence of accounts of supernatural and miraculous events and deeds, in the biblical writings, of itself afford any argument that these writings are inspired. Upon this point there is a large amount of popular misapprehension. In reading the sacred history of the Old Testament the devout mind feels that God is brought near to it in a very extraordinary way. Behold what deeds He wrought for the salvation and chastisement of Israel! Or if this feeling is not always vivid in the perusal of the Old Testament, it is likely strongly to arise on reading the life of our Lord in the Gospels. We say truly, never man spake or did as this man. Surely, the highest and most authoritative exhibition of the divine power, wisdom, and grace are given in these words and deeds! Such conclusions as these are the legitimate effect upon the human mind

of coming into contact with such an one as Jesus. But from such conclusions it is very natural to pass at once to the conclusion that the book which holds the records of such words and deeds must itself partake of the same supernatural and inspired character. It is obvious, however, that the conclusion *in this form* loses its validity at once when we make and apply the very clear distinction between the miracle and the record of the miracle; or between doing a divinely inspired deed and simply telling about it.

And yet there is a valid argument for the inspiration of the biblical writers to be derived from the very way in which they write about the miracles. Let us briefly consider this argument. The biblical conception of what a miracle is, and the biblical view of the place which miraculous occurrences have in God's self-revelation, are quite unlike anything else which exists in human history. Nowhere out of the Bible do we find anything like that lofty ethical and religious conception of the nature and meaning of miracles which the biblical writers, as a rule, hold up to our view. Whence did these writers derive the conception of God as using nature in this way to make Himself known in justice and grace as the Redeemer of man? We may enforce this question by the central miracle, with which the whole construction of the Christian Church is so closely connected,—the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus. The only satisfactory explanation of the very conception of Jesus as the risen and glorious Saviour is to be found in the fact that He did so rise. How different is this conception from any that could have been

framed by deceived and uninspired enthusiasts, on the basis of such ancient apocryphal writings as the books of Wisdom, of Enoch, and of Fourth Ezra! *

Moreover, the biblical doctrine of revelation and the biblical view of miracles are very closely related. The principal writers of the Bible represent the connection with a profound insight, and yet with the greatest simplicity. This fact is as obvious as any fact can well be on a thoughtful reading of the four Gospels. In speaking of the wonders which Christ wrought, there is no apparent effort to multiply or magnify them, or aim to arrange the details for scenic effect; no essay at display or even in a fictitious way to advertise the divine power and authority. Expressions of wonder or surprise on the writer's part, that all this should have been so, are rare and unaffected; and when the wonder of the people at His miraculous deeds is referred to, there seems to be no intention to heighten the natural result. On the contrary, innumerable acts of miraculous healing are sometimes summed up in the few words that give the simple record of a single day. Jesus is represented as performing a great many miracles; He is tired out, and withdraws for rest. As though, indeed, this were what all would admit that He actually did, so many were the instances of it, and so great the number of the eye-witnesses. In less degree in the Old Testament, and yet there in a remarkable degree, the same *naturalness* seems to attach itself to many of these wonderful doings of God which serve to make men know and feel that *He* is in the midst of them in justice and in grace.

* D. S. S., i., p. 321 f.

To convince one of this difference between the biblical record of miracles and all other narratives of similar wonderful occurrences, it is but necessary to read and compare with the Scriptures the early ecclesiastical accounts of the Church miracles, or the stories told by heathen writers, or the modern tales of spiritualistic disclosures and performances. How different is the character of the conception formed, and how different the estimate held by the Bible of the supernatural occurrences it records! We insist upon the following, among other differences: In the biblical narratives there is an almost complete lack of that disposition to exaggerate which belongs to nearly all the other literature of the supernatural. There is also, with a few exceptions (as, for example, the narrative of the sun standing still on command, etc.), a discretion, which is for the age and audience remarkable, about passing the limits fixed for miraculous events by the customary divine order in nature. The fidelity of the biblical writers, in adhering to conceptions of law and seemliness, and in bringing even the miracles under the spiritual order of a divine process of revealing God's justice and grace, is a marked characteristic. And nowhere else do we find the same "holy teleology," which makes the miracle much more than a medium of display; which makes it, indeed, a factor, in whose existence and significance the whole world has an interest, of the self-disclosure of Deity as the Redeemer of man.

We conclude, therefore, that *the way* in which the biblical writers apprehend and represent the meaning and intent of the biblical miracles is a proof of the in

spiration of these writers. It shows that the same spirit which discloses itself in the natural event breathes within those who have such rare insight into the significance of the event. Without this divine in-breathing, this inspiration of the narrator and recorder of the event, we cannot understand his exaltation of spiritual insight. This inspiration of the biblical writers is not, however, to be regarded as an impulse that came upon them spasmodically, as it were, or in a compulsory fashion, as though from without. Nor is it to be regarded as especially given to them for the act of writing the narrative, or only while they are engaged in such act. Nor, again, is it an inspiration unlike that enjoyed by all their pious contemporaries. It is indeed the genuine work of the Holy Spirit within their spirits,—a work of informing them with spiritual insight and sympathy with the divine purposes as viewed from the higher and diviner points of view.

We should not be warranted in maintaining, however, that the inspiration of the writers has secured the miraculous contents of the Bible against all historical error. The narrative of a miracle is always of an historical character. It is not itself miraculous; it carries in itself no claim to acceptance as an infallible history. From Genesis to Revelation not one such claim, direct or indirect, is actually put forth by any biblical writer, or can by good and necessary reasoning be deduced from what any biblical writer says.

Nor can it be claimed that the historical evidence for all the miraculous events recorded in the Scriptures is alike convincing and indubitable. It is not import-

ant that we should have evidence of this sort. The Bible contains the record of certain miracles. It cannot, simply as their record, authenticate all the miracles without being itself a kind of perpetual and universal miracle. If the Bible were such a perpetual and universal miracle, it could not be known to be such, except upon the grounds of historical evidence; that is to say, it would have to be tested and showed to be such by the canons of historical criticism. But this is the very test which we may apply, one by one, to the biblical narratives of the miracles. No theory of the infallible (and therefore miraculous) origin of the entire biblical account of the miracles can ever be founded on anything like so good grounds as those on which we found our confidence in the possibility of miracles, in the truth that Christ possessed the power of working them, and in the facts which constitute the great central miracles of the Bible.

The historical evidence for the New-Testament miracles is also much stronger and more conclusive than that for most of the Old-Testament miracles. The devout Christian, as he reads the narratives of wonderful events which occur in different parts of the Bible, is called upon to make distinctions in the interest both of faith and of reason. He may make such distinctions with safety. He may thus hold by the firm centre of faith which surrounds his Redeemer. He may, without detriment to this faith, regard the evidence for the miracles of the Old Testament as weaker, historically considered, and yet as strengthened by the relations in which, as a rule, they stand to that divine process of

revelation which culminates in the Redeemer. If he discovers reason to believe that any of these remote occurrences have, on account of the relative darkness of the times, been only obscurely seen and apprehended, and not perfectly reported by the Hebrew writer, he need feel no alarm at this discovery. If he finds biblical critics maintaining the opinion that this is so, he need take no offence at it. The real cause of the Bible is endangered only when we so link what is essential and indubitable with what is unessential and doubtful, that the two in our thoughts stand or fall together.

To illustrate the truth of the position just taken toward the biblical accounts of miracles, let us take a few examples. In various places in the Pentateuch the ability to work miracles and wonders is ascribed to false divinities;* in this way, these divinities seem to be accorded an inherent power over God's universe which it is difficult for our present views of the relation of God to that universe to entertain. In the law of Deuteronomy (xiii. 1–3) the sound advice is given, however, that the coming to pass of dreams and wonders should never be allowed by the believer in Jehovah to lead him away after other gods. Exodus (see chap. vii., verse 11 f.) represents the sorcerers of Egypt as matching, so to speak, the wonders which God wrought by Moses, and thus persuading Pharaoh not to hearken to Moses. The exhortation of Deuteronomy is one which applies to us as truly, and perhaps as forcefully, as it did to the children of Israel. But the point of view which these ancient writers still held toward the

* D. S. S., i., p. 331.

divinities of the nations by which they were surrounded has long since been abandoned by the Christian religion.

In Judges, especially, we find a number of stories of wonders wrought by Samson which we may regard from various points of view without any infidelity whatever toward Christianity or sacred Scripture. The writer of this book (see xvi. 16 f.) apparently regards Samson's miraculous strength as lying in his unshorn hair; somewhat as the writer of 2 Kings (see ii. 8 and 14) apparently regards the power to divide the waters as residing in the mantle of the prophet. To doubt the truth of this view in no way affects our faith in the miraculous content of the Christian religion or in the general credibility of the biblical accounts of miracles. Indeed, the entire circle of traditions about Samson which Judges presents may be examined from the critical and historical point of view, and the examination may end in a conclusion favorable or unfavorable to their historical credibility without altering at all the faith and practice of the Christian believer. Of course, then, it is not essential that we should credit the statement (Judges xv. 19) that God opened a miraculous fountain for the refreshment of this hero—whether we understand the Hebrew text to mean that this was done by cleaving a hollow place at Lehi or by splitting a tooth in the jaw-bone Samson had been using. Surely, it would be going far beyond the warrant of Christ and His Apostles to impose upon the believer conditions as to the view he shall take of the origin and credibility of such accounts as these.

The same view of certain of the Old-Testament narratives of miracles may be illustrated in detail by the case of Joshua x. 12–14. We have here given in poetical form the narrative of the military leader of Israel's forces, who, when they were in battle with the Amorites, in order to gain more time for the slaughter of their enemies, said in the sight of the people:

> "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon:
> And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon."

Then the song goes on to say:

> "And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,
> Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies."

This song is quoted as "written in the Book of Jashar," a work which was not completed, apparently, until after the time of David.* To the quotation the writer of Joshua adds his conception of the fact as follows: "And the sun stayed in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day."

Now, although Jehovah is spoken of in other places of the Old Testament as punishing the enemies of Israel with hailstones, nothing at all resembling this miracle of causing the sun to stand still for a whole day for such a purpose, as regarded from the point of view furnished by our present knowledge of the solar system, occurs anywhere else in the Bible. In the Greek classics, however, some pretty close analogies are found. Thus Agamemnon prays that Zeus will not let the sun go down until he has destroyed Priam's

* 2 Samuel i. 18.

dwelling. Events similar are narrated as actually occurring in the behalf of the Greek hero Ulysses. The lengthening of the daylight by preventing the sun from going down for a whole day was, of course, a very different affair to the ancients from what it must seem to us. The author of the apocryphal book of Sirach, indeed, increases the time involved in this miracle so as to make two full days out of the one spoken of in Joshua.

In view of the stupendous difficulties that encompass a literal interpretation of this narrative, many different attempts have been made to soften it—all of them, of course, in the supposed behalf of the Bible.* Some would understand the account to refer to an extraordinary refraction of light; others to a great shower of meteors, with an accompanying disturbance of the earth's course. One theologian, whose views of the inspiration of sacred Scripture are intended to be of the very strictest and loftiest kind, supposes that the day was *subjectively* lengthened, because Joshua and the Israelites were so busy killing their enemies that, having no accurate timepieces, the work of this day seemed like the work of two days. But what thoroughly honest mind, on reading the biblical narrative, does not feel disturbed and pained by all such efforts to harmonize its plain statements with any of these views of the case. The last attempt just spoken of repels us as a rather dishonorable subterfuge; it sacrifices the intelligence and moral character of the writer

* D. S. S., i., p. 337 f.

of this Scripture to a theory of the inspiration of Scripture in general.

Plainly, only one of two courses is possible in the interpretation of this passage of Joshua. We must either hold that at that time, in obedience to the command of the military leader of Israel, and in order to give the Israelites more time to pursue and punish the Amorites, the sun ceased to move (or, as we should say, the earth ceased to rotate on its axis) for "about a whole day," or that the writer has made some mistake in the matter. To take the first course undoubtedly leads us against the most stupendous difficulties—difficulties so immense that those of the narrative of the Noachian Deluge dwindle in comparison. In taking the second course one would naturally justify one's self in some what like the following way: There existed before the Book of Joshua was written a description of this ancient battle in a "song" praising the great deeds of that day; and this song was preserved in a collection called the Book of Jashar. The writer of Joshua mistook the figurative statement of the ancient poetic source which he employed for a literal statement of historical fact. He had no conception, of course, of the enormous difficulties which, as we view the whole matter, stand in the way of such an interpretation. It is not our purpose at present to argue for either one of these two possible ways of understanding the miracle of Joshua x. 12–14. We are simply illustrating the important truth that all the biblical miracles are not alike related to the Christian faith, or alike possessed of satisfactory historical evidence; and that the Chris

tian reader who doubts the accuracy of any particular narrative of a miracle (for example, of this miracle of the Old-Testament Book of Joshua) does not thereby jeopardize in the least his Christian faith or general confidence in the credibility of the biblical miracles. In other words, in each case we may freely, but cautiously and devoutly, examine the evidence.

The conclusions warranted on this important subject of the nature and evidence of miracles may, then, be summed up as follows: The biblical doctrine of miracles is very closely and even inseparably allied with the biblical doctrine of revelation, as well as with our Christian view of the Bible as revealing God. It is quite impossible to remove the miraculous elements from the facts and teachings of the Christian religion as these facts and teachings are given to us by the writers of sacred Scripture. But to regard all miracles as being, in their very nature, violations or suspensions of the laws of nature, introduces distinctions which the Bible and a true philosophy alike refuse to recognize; it also gratuitously multiplies the difficulties which modern science finds with miracles in general. The nature of the biblical miracle is to make obvious, by some extraordinary occurrence, the presence and power of the supernatural in the natural, of God in the world, for the purpose of furthering His plans of justice and grace. It is an important factor in the revelation of the Bible.

The special nature of the biblical revelation is to make God known in history as the Redeemer of sinful man. This revelation has its culminating and central manifestation in Jesus Christ, the Lord and Redeemer

His personality, His incarnation, His resurrection, His spiritual exaltation and presence with His people,—these are the chief of all miracles. Looking upon Him as the chief and central miracle, and then viewing the other miracles of the Bible in the light of the divine meaning of this personality, we can see how they are in general factors or parts in one great plan of the divine self-revelation in redemption. There are different stages and degrees of perfection in this revelation. For the revelation itself is in and through an historical process. But it is a continuous and increasingly clearer manifestation of the justice and grace of God the Redeemer, until the full light of this disclosure shines in the face of Christ upon the world. It is as connected with this process of making God known that the biblical miracles have such a great and important office.

But the record of a miracle is not itself necessarily a miracle. Even the inspired writer, when recording a miracle, may be subject to all the conditions which occasion mistakes in other historical writing;—unless there is evidence to show that his inspiration is of such a nature as to keep him from all mistakes. The Bible, however, nowhere claims for itself perfect freedom from all historical error. We recognize the wonderful and unique idea of a miracle, and the wonderful and unique manner of speaking of miracles, which belong to the biblical writers, as proofs of their inspiration. But we maintain the right and duty of examining in detail the evidence upon which each of the narratives of these miracles rests.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HISTORIES OF THE BIBLE.

The thoughtful reader of the biblical history, from its beginning with the narrative of the Creation and Fall of man, to its close in the founding and first propagation of the Christian Church, cannot fail to be impressed with its dignity of character. There are, indeed, many events recorded by these writers which, if considered by themselves and isolated from their connection with a divine plan that runs through the whole, might be considered trivial. It is not even necessary to maintain that frivolous or doubtful traditions have in no case been preserved within the present limits of the sacred literature. But it is certain that such historical elements, if they exist at all, appear comparatively insignificant in number and influence when the main scope and trend and spirit of the biblical history are taken into account.

This dignity of character which belongs to the biblical histories is due, in part, to the nature of the materials with which they deal. The chief purpose of these histories is seen in the fact that they show how the kingdom of God on earth grew in its preparation for and realization of the advent of Jesus Christ; as well as how God by such historical growth, and in His personal advent, has made Himself known and felt as the Redeemer of man.

But the dignity of the biblical histories is also, in part, due to the dignity of form in which the history is given. If the writers of these histories show by the very character of their writing that they worthily enter into the divine spirit and intent of the events they record, this is of itself enough to warrant us in speaking of their inspiration. Now, as has been said, it is the form of the history, in part, which gives to it such wonderful moral and religious dignity. But this form is due to the writers themselves. For the "*form*" is that which the writer of every history imparts to his materials. In this way, then, we may derive a general argument for the inspiration of the writers of biblical history.

But the argument as just outlined was by no means satisfactory to that theory of the inspiration of the Bible which was held by the *post*-Reformation Protestant theology. This theory demanded that the histories of the Bible should be considered absolutely infallible with respect to all statements of fact, without any exception whatever. Not even a name or a date, it argued, could be given incorrectly by an inspired writer; a single instance of historical error would vitiate the theory of these theologians. And since it was not proposed to undertake an examination of the facts, with a view to test the truth of the theory by methods of investigation recognized as applicable to all historical questions, it was held that the writings *must* be free from error in order to save the theory.

There no doubt exists a very natural disinclination on the part of many devout readers of the Bible to admit

that any of its statements of historical fact are not strictly accurate. That most of these statements are made with honest intent, that they are not designed to deceive, should indeed be patent to every reader. Now, the unwillingness of many even to consider the possibility of historical inaccuracies in the Bible arises from several sources. It is partly the result of a lingering hold which the former theory, that inspired writers *must* be infallible in respect to all the particulars of history, still has upon the mind of Christendom. It is also, in part, an honorable recoil from every thought of taking delight in finding flaws in details of such venerable and sacred narratives. For the scholar who proceeds in the most conscientious and devout manner to his task, it is no agreeable thing to discover the existence of historical discrepancies and misstatements in sacred Scripture. To point them out often seems like pointing out the few blemishes that exist in the countenance or work of a most beloved and admirable friend.

But, in view of what has already been said, one may fitly speak to one's self and to others a word of encouragement and of cheer in this very connection. The Bible nowhere, either directly or indirectly, makes any claim whatever to an historical infallibility, to a freedom from all mistakes, for the writers of its histories. Not a doctrine of the Christian faith, not even the true, useful, and sufficient doctrine of Holy Scripture, is in any way dependent upon the historical infallibility of the Bible. Indeed, most of these questions of historical details are—we may say, with the greatest affection and reverence for the sacred writings—of little or no account

whatever so far as our general view of the Bible is concerned. It makes no difference whatever to our faith as Christians, or in the usefulness of the biblical authors for our education in doctrine and conduct, whether the number of the forces engaged in some Old-Testament battle is given correctly or not; whether the age of Sarai when she went with Abram to Egypt can be calculated so as to accord with the narrative of Genesis xii. 10 ff., or not; etc., etc.

Even those apparent discrepancies, which a comparative study of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) discloses in such great numbers, have, as a rule, little or no important bearing on our view of the essential nature of Christ's deeds or teachings. Even if all the apparent discrepancies of these Gospels were at once admitted to be real and unreconcilable, a sufficiently broad historical foundation for our Christian faith would remain undisturbed. It is of the very nature of all historical records to abound in discrepancies with respect to details. For example, the present generation is as yet scarcely a quarter of a century removed from the events of the great war of the Rebellion. Thousands of men are still living who were interested and intelligent actors, and eye- and ear-witnesses in its impressive scenes. But it is already quite impossible to secure perfect agreement concerning what occurred during any single battle. This experience of uncertainty as respects the precise details of what is said and done accompanies our daily lives. Not one of us can give an account of what happened to us no longer ago than yesterday, or even no longer than an

hour since, without running great risk of being inaccurate in certain details.

That view of the biblical histories which regards them as necessarily infallible in details, because of the character of the inspiration imparted to their writers, is therefore scarcely less irrational and dangerous than the view which rejects the histories, their inspiration and truthfulness together, on account of their apparent discrepancies. No course is then so wise, safe, and really loyal to the Bible, as that which admits, without hesitation, the possibility of historical error in the sacred writings, and then proceeds without disturbance of faith, and in the spirit of fairness, to determine to what extent such errors actually exist.

The question whether the Bible is genuinely historical or not is, however, far different from the question whether the accuracy of all its historical details is complete and unimpeachable.* Did Jesus live, and was He in character and work such an one as the Gospels represent Him to be? Were those doctrines, on which the apostles are represented by the Acts and principal Epistles of the New Testament as founding the Christian Church, really and historically derived from chosen and inspired followers of Christ; or are these doctrines the results of only partially reconciled conflicts of sects belonging to the latter half of the first and first quarter of the second centuries of the Christian era? Did Moses give a law to Israel; and did Israel, from the time of Moses onward, understand itself to be under a covenant with Jehovah as a spiritual God who was to be their

* D. S. S., i., p. 344 f.

Redeemer? How much of the early chapters of Genesis have a claim to be regarded as genuine history? These and similar inquiries are far more important and interesting than the comparatively petty questions that arise over the possibility of reconciling details.

In considering the subject of this chapter we shall, therefore, first examine the historical character of certain important parts of the Bible, about which inquiry is most interesting and fruitful. Only after we have seen how far and on what grounds we may regard these parts as genuine and substantially true histories, shall we turn our attention briefly to the relatively unimportant point of historical discrepancies.

The larger inquiry into the substantially historical character and general credibility of the biblical histories is closely connected with two other important inquiries. These are the inquiry as to the historical nature of the biblical accounts of miracles, and the inquiry as to the date and authorship of the different books of the Bible. The first of these we have already answered in a general way. The second, although it bears directly upon the subject of this chapter, we shall separate as far as possible and reserve for consideration later on.

One or two preliminary remarks need now to be made. It has already been said that important and complex events in history, especially after the lapse of some time, are rarely or never described and recorded without numerous departures in details from a strict and literal accuracy. Where such events are witnessed or their history is given by several persons, discrepancies in the several accounts are certain to appear. To reason from

this inevitable fact to the untrustworthiness of all human testimony on the principle that what is false in one particular is false in all, would lead us to utter scepticism regarding the past. Genuine history would thus be rendered impossible. Scepticism has sometimes applied this principle to the Gospels with a view to discredit them as completely as possible, because they apparently disagree in so many details of the life of Jesus Christ. So Strauss, on the ground of disagreement in the different accounts of our Lord's resurrection, reached the coarse and impious conclusion that we could only render the verdict of "dead without particulars." But not infrequently the same untrue and mischievous application of the principle, that what is false in one particular is false in all, is held over the minds of uninformed Christians to fill them with fear at the admission of so much as a single historical error in any part of sacred Scripture.

The critical examination of the historical trustworthiness of the biblical narratives requires a knowledge of the methods of historical study, of the different kinds of sources from which our knowledge of the past comes, and of the methods of writing history employed by different composers of historical works. In the case of the sacred historians the sources of their information are either their own eye- and ear-witness of the facts they record, or tradition, or previously-written records. In the case of the Old-Testament narratives the sources of information are almost exclusively of the latter two kinds. That no critical sifting of traditions was undertaken by the Hebrew writers is a fact which bears

upon the character of the narratives they record. The same thing is true of almost all narratives of very ancient events. The sources of our information concerning these events go back to oral tradition, to accounts handed down from person to person, or even from generation to generation by word of mouth.

The sacred writers also, like all the more ancient writers of history, where two or more different or discordant traditions or written records came before them, often followed the method of setting all their materials down with little or no effort at harmonizing their statements. The modern historian gathers his materials from all available sources, and then uses his skill and judgment in constructing from them one consistent account of what the past occurrences were. But the sacred historians of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament, do not construct their accounts in this way. We cannot fail to see that it is a great gain and blessing to us, on the whole, that these historians made little or no attempt to be critical in the modern fashion. For they had no means and no experience such as could give them success in such an attempt. Moreover, the critical attitude of mind toward those venerable traditions and records which came to them from their fathers would have been almost incompatible with their success as teachers of the moral and religious truths which the historical events conveyed. And surely *we* are infinitely better off, and have a much firmer historical basis upon which to rest our faith in these moral and religious truths, than we should have had if they had attempted the critical course.

In cases like that of the narrative of the Deluge in

the days of Noah—where two or more traditions are in some sort pieced together—no attempt at concealment of any apparent discrepancies has been made by the biblical writers. It is thus often possible to restore to very nearly their original form the different traditions, and so to avail ourselves of all the independent information which they contain.

The Gospels—especially the first three—repeatedly present to us two or three different accounts of the same event in the life of our Lord. In certain cases the same Gospel shows traces of having used more than one account of some particular event. The entire picture of this life which each Gospel gives is a very different affair from what would have been produced if the Evangelists had attempted in the modern critical fashion to work over the different oral traditions and written fragments in existence when they wrote, so as to make a consistent and elaborate historical result. But how much better off are we because of the gracious Providence which forbade their attempting such a work! For we have preserved for our contemplation and critical consideration the very material which was at the disposal of the Evangelists themselves. We can well afford to be ignorant as to just what form of a noun or verb our Lord used in some particular instance of His teaching, or whether He healed on a certain occasion more than one blind man, either before or after entering a certain city; if we can gain on the whole so vivid and varied an apostolic picture of Jesus speaking and acting as the Saviour of man.

One point more should be insisted on in a pre-

liminary way. There is no proof whatever that the revelation which the writers of sacred Scripture received ever consisted in informing them of the mere facts of the past. There is no proof that God ever made any past event known in a supernatural way to any scribe of the biblical accounts. The sources of the histories of the Bible are only the ordinary historical sources—such as the senses of contemporaries, or the traditions and records that have come down from preceding generations.

The early chapters of Genesis, for example, are those parts of the Old Testament which, as far as mere knowledge of the facts is concerned, make the most obvious claim to an origin in divine revelation. But the knowledge of these facts, too, can be shown to have come to the author of Genesis solely in the ordinary way of tradition or of written documents. How clear does Luke make it in his prologue that he is simply intending to give the facts as he has learned them from witnesses at first and second hand! It is the office of revelation to make known moral and religious truth; revelation, therefore, sometimes concerns the *meaning* of historical events. In the Bible, since its history is sacred history, is the record of the divine process of self-revealing, this history is itself worthy to be called a revelation. So, too, the biblical inspiration has to do, not primarily with the learning and stating of historical facts, but with sympathetic moral insight into the meaning of the facts.

The question to what extent, if at all, legendary and mythical elements enter into any of the biblical narra-

tives demands a careful critical investigation. It cannot be settled by an off-hand appeal to a theory of inspiration constructed previously to such investigation. For even sacred myths may, so far as we can see, be made the medium of revealing moral and religious truth. And traditions also may be made the medium of revelation, even when they have been so far changed by additions and subtractions, by being passed from mouth to mouth, and from age to age, as to lose nearly all recognizable resemblance to the facts from which they originally sprung. As a matter of fact, however, the attempt to apply the so-called mythical theory to the origin of the Gospels has signally failed. We cannot account for the narratives of the events in Christ's life as growing out of the play of imagination over the words and deeds of an ideal Messiah. And in the Old Testament, considering the very ancient character and strong moral and religious motive of most of its history, there is remarkably little which lends itself to such treatment. At most, it is only with respect to certain of the narratives in the early chapters of Genesis that the marks of the myth at all clearly appear.

Legends may perhaps be found to be somewhat frequent in the earlier history of Israel. In Judges, as connected with the persons of some of its heroes, like Samson, such forms of narrative are discovered. Traditions that are of uncertain origin, and that represent an original which cannot very definitely be recalled, are perhaps more frequent still. But after everything of this sort has been fairly considered by biblical criticism, the great body of the biblical history is left substan-

tially untouched; it is still possible to derive from it a sufficiently faithful picture of the factors, eras, and truths belonging to the development of biblical religion. The firmest and clearest places of all the biblical history are just those where the Christian needs to plant his feet for the walk of faith with God revealed in Jesus Christ. As long as this remains true, it really makes but little difference to either his faith or his practice, just how far the narratives of the Patriarchs before the Deluge, or of the heroes in Judges, are found to be defensible at the bar of historical criticism.

It is, then, with a spirit of both courage and freedom that we are to enter upon the examination of the historical character of the biblical histories. It is only the mistaken application of the principle, "false in one, then false in all," which compels the mind either to feel alarm at finding uncertain traditions and historical inaccuracies in some parts of sacred Scripture, or to feel a wicked pleasure in the effort to destroy the historical foundations of faith by picking slight flaws in its superstructure.

We consider, first, the opening chapters of Genesis from the third to the twelfth.* The sources of these chapters are undoubtedly traditional. We are here able to compare the biblical traditions with corresponding ones which grew up on other grounds. The view which the Bible takes of the *first pair* as formed from the soil, or from clay, and as existing in an original condition of happy innocency, was widely disseminated in antiquity. The most important feature of the bib

* D. S. S., i., p. 347 f.

lical history is the religious teaching that man comes from a free act of the divine will, and existed originally in the divine image. That is to say, the biblical monotheism, when these chapters were written, had already exercised an ennobling and purifying influence over the tradition of the creation and early life of the first pair.

The picture of the Garden of Eden, or place where this life began, is also a traditional one, and seems not to have originated on Palestinian soil. The tradition of the Bundehesh, for example, represents the garden of Yima, in which Ahura-Mazda gave to Mithra a dwelling-place, as a blessed spot free from night and darkness, and from hot and cold winds. The location of this garden, which is fixed in Genesis by four rivers, two of which seem undoubtedly to be the Euphrates and the Tigris, has never yet been settled at any place on the earth's surface in accordance with existing geographical conditions. Eden has wandered over the face of the earth from Scandinavia to the islands of the South Sea, and has recently been relegated by an elaborate argument to the North Pole. Even in the Old Testament itself there appear traces of the tradition which put this garden of the blessed in northern mountains.*

Wide-spread traditions of a *temptation and fall* also existed in ancient times. The Bundehesh relates the fall of man in a way which preserves some of the characteristic features of the narrative in Genesis. His first sin, according to its account, consists in ascribing things

* Isaiah xiv. 13; Ezekiel xxviii. 13 f.; and D. S. S., i., p. 249 f

fair and good to the spirit of evil rather than to the spirit of good. His second sin consists in taking and eating fruits given to him by a lying Deva. Only after his fall does man begin to take animal food and to be clothed with the skins of beasts. Some of these traditions show traces of the "tree of life." The serpent plays a great part in that religious symbolism which perhaps reaches back to the time before the ancestors of the Egyptians, Hebrews, and ancient Persians had separated. But Mazdeism appears to be the only ancient religion in which the serpent never symbolizes anything good. This religion represents the spirit of evil as descending upon the earth in the form of a serpent to corrupt it. But in respect to this tradition of the temptation and fall also the great superiority of the form of the story found in Genesis is not due so much to its accuracy in historical details (if indeed we are to speak of historical details here), but rather to its immeasurably higher moral conception of the nature of sin and of the way that sin originated.

Nowhere else in the entire Bible do we find narratives the genuine historical character of which is more doubtful, and the moral and religious value less obvious, than those of the fourth, fifth, and early part of the sixth chapters of Genesis. The *genealogies of the Cainites and Sethites* seem originally to have been given in separate documents. The genealogy of the Sethites is dry and precise, is of "Elohist" origin, and seems to be introduced in preparation for the narrative of the Flood. The genealogy of the Cainites admits various elements of outside traditions and probably, in

some cases, of myths—as, for example, where (iv. 23 f.) Lamech is represented as singing a kind of war-song to his wives Adah (*beauty* or *light*) and Zillah (*shadow*), whose children are made the founders of different trades, the female progeny Naamah becoming, according to rabbinical tradition, "the mistress of mourners and singers." Various analogies to the ten antediluvian patriarchs occur in antiquity; for the tradition of ten kings or patriarchs is widely reproduced. But even in this part of the Hebrew narrative of the times preceding Noah, a comparison with other most nearly allied traditions shows the purifying influence of the Hebrew religious ideas. The false religions of antiquity led their devotees into the most wild and enormous falsehoods with respect to the occurrences which accompanied their founding.

No more difficult passage, in respect to its historical foundation and moral import, exists anywhere in the Old Testament than that given in Genesis vi. 1–4. This passage is somewhat doubtful of interpretation.* But the view of the Apocrypha, and apparently of Jude (verse 6 f.) and of 2 Peter (ii. 4) accords with that of almost all modern critics. The angels are here represented as being tempted by the beauty of the daughters of men and so contracting marriages with them; the fruit of these marriages was the heroes whose renown filled the ancient traditions. Thus interpreted, no student of the Bible would seem warranted in regarding it as a truthful narrative of historical fact. But even in this case we note that,

* D. S. S., i., p. 355 f.

whereas the myths of heathen nations trace the descent of their demigods to a physical divine generation, in a manner abhorrent to the Hebrew religious ideas, the exaltation of these heroes is regarded by the narrative of Genesis as one of violence and pride, that received a merited divine punishment.

The traditions gathered up in the *ethnographic table* of Genesis x.,* the legendary account of Nimrod, the mighty hunter before Jehovah, in 8–11 of the same chapter, and the tradition of the tower of Babel which furnishes in the mind of the author an explanation for the variety of languages that existed in his day, do not require a separate examination.

There can be no doubt, then, that the first eleven chapters of Genesis contain a large amount of material the historical character of which it is difficult or impossible to establish. This material is in many particulars strikingly like the traditions current among surrounding nations. To say thus much is simply to state the fact. To deny or explain it away involves the attempt to deny or explain away a fact. Some of these traditions in Genesis are so similar to certain Chaldean traditions that it seems not improbable that the first ancestors of the Hebrews brought them along when they migrated westward from their ancient seat. The more recent investigations in Assyriology bring to light new points of resemblance between the Hebrew traditions of the earliest history of men, and of the origin and distribution of the different tribes and

* D. S. S., i., p. 356 f.

nations, and the traditions of the peoples that remained in the regions east of Palestine.

And now what shall be said as to the sacred character and authority of these early chapters of Genesis? As to their *historical* character and validity it must be said that this is to be determined solely by the inquiry into the historical character and validity of the traditions which the chapters preserve. A critical study must be left to determine how much value any of these traditions possess as representing exact matter of fact. But as to the value of the same chapters for laying the foundations of biblical religion we have a different kind of judgment to render. When these traditions are compared with the traditions of other peoples, which they most closely resemble, they appear to have been subjected to the purifying influence of that purer monotheistic religion which Israel alone enjoyed. It was Mosaism that put an end, in the Hebrew nation, to those tendencies to wild and even immoral mythmaking in which the surrounding heathen peoples so largely indulged. But, even before Mosaism was established, it is likely that these traditions had been subjected among the Hebrews to the purifying influence of their religion. We must remember, however, that the narratives of the first eleven chapters of Genesis all antedate the time of Abraham, who is represented by the Bible itself as being the first ancestor of the nation to separate himself from heathenism.

And now let us reverently raise the question as to what God would probably do in carrying out His in

tention to reveal Himself as the Redeemer of all mankind, if such revelation involved an historical process and the selection and training of one nation above all others in the principles of true religion. It is conceivable that God might impart by revelation, with the strictest accuracy of details, a mass of ethnographic and geographical and historical knowledge which should reach immeasurably beyond any traditions of past events that could possibly be preserved. But so far as any evidence exists with regard to such a matter, God did not take this course. Indeed, we may ask, Of what moral or spiritual use would it have been to the men of those ancient times (or, for that matter, to us of the present times) to have accurate information on these points? What benefit to know precisely who was the father of whom; and who invented this or that art; and what was the age of each antediluvian patriarch at the time of his decease? But for the people of Israel at the time when the material now gathered into Genesis was taking shape, to seize upon the great truths of monotheistic religion, as these truths had been taught to their ancestors and were to be perpetuated and unfolded in their own history and sacred writings—this was of great moral and spiritual benefit. The divine spiritual work with Israel and with the writer of Genesis does not, then, guarantee the truth of the popular traditions; but it does display itself in the moral and spiritual ennobling of those traditions as regarded from the point of view to which this spiritual work raised Israel in general, and the writer of Genesis in particular.

The biblical traditions which begin with Abraham

and include the three great patriarchs, the traditions of Joseph and of Israel in Egypt, and those narratives which come down to the time when the place of tradition was more largely taken by contemporaneous documents, are subject to the foregoing considerations in only a limited way. There are, indeed, several pairs of apparently divergent traditions of events in the life of Abraham which have been incorporated into the narrative of Genesis. But we have, on the whole, a clear, beautiful, life-like picture of the personality and history of this great man. Nor is there any sufficient reason to doubt either that he was "the immigrant and father of nations," or that he was the "friend of God." Indeed, it could probably be shown that we have more verifiable knowledge of the history and personality of Abraham than of any other character of a like antiquity. There can be no doubt that the picture of this patriarch as given by Genesis is immeasurably superior with respect to its moral and religious dignity and influence to any found outside of the Bible that goes back to times at all so ancient. So, too, the general historical credibility of the traditions of the other patriarchs subsequent to Abraham may be successfully maintained.

In Judges and Numbers, however, certain traditional material of more doubtful historical credibility and of inferior moral value, is sometimes to be found. Such is, for example, the narrative of the life and exploits of Samson, and the narrative of Balaam. We may reject the rather shallow theory which tries to account for the case of Samson by pointing out resemblances between the career of this hero and certain solar myths of a

heathen origin.* Such resemblances are, for the most part, fanciful, and the theory built upon them is a fiction.

That a man like Samson, of immense brute strength and lawless life, should distinguish himself in the defense of his nation against the Philistines, by deeds similar to those preserved in these biblical traditions, is by no means incredible. The narrative of Judges is full of particulars which seem historical in character. At the same time the traditions of Samson do not, by any means, stand in the first rank of Old-Testament Scriptures either with respect to their historical character or their moral usefulness. They have evidently been subjected to a process of exaggeration and poetizing; and there are grounds for supposing that the general resistance of the nation of the Philistines has, as Lenormant and others think, been to some extent personified in Samson. The author of Judges seems not insensible to the drollery of the stories he is telling, although the spirit of national piety restrains his feeling. To assign any high moral value to these exploits, or to the character of the hero of them, results not so much in elevating our estimate of Samson as in bringing down the general moral tone of the Old Testament, which is certainly much above that of these traditions.

The account which Numbers gives of Balaam † appears to contain the two traditions to which may be traced back the very different views of his person that prevailed in later times. According to one tradition, Balaam is a worshipper of the true God, who, in igno

* D. S. S., i., p. 365. † D. S. S., i., p. 364.

rance of the fact that Israel also worshipped Him, would have cursed the people whom he really obeyed God in blessing. This tradition is followed in several places in the Old Testament. The other tradition represented Balaam as guilty of blasphemy and of attempts to seduce the Israelites to fornication and idolatry. This unfavorable view of Balaam is found more rarely in the Old Testament, but was adopted by the legends of the Talmud, and is found in the references to Balaam in the New Testament (2 Pet. ii. 15; Jude 11; Rev. ii. 14).

If to the above-mentioned portions of the Old-Testament writings we add the Book of Jonah (which, indeed, seems never to have been designed by its author to be understood as throughout a narrative of fact) and the Books of Daniel and Esther, we have comprised almost all of those writings, to the general historical credibility of which it is especially difficult to answer the objections.

Biblical scholars are now tolerably well agreed that it is with the picture of the national condition as given by the prophets of the eighth century before Christ that we reach the firmer historical foundations laid by contemporaneous records. But as regards the right way to draw and interpret this picture, two contradictory views are maintained. One view is that of the so-called "destructive" critics; the other is that of the so-called "constructive" or "conservative" critics. The former consider that the picture of the religious condition of the people of Israel and of the nature of their religion, which appears in the genuine writings of the oldest prophets, is utterly

incompatible with the credibility, even of the most general sort, of those books which claim to narrate their history previous to the eighth century. Especially do such critics hold that almost all which the Old Testament has to communicate regarding the person, history, and law of Moses, is incredible. Of Moses' person and history, say they, we know little or nothing: of the law which goes by his name, we cannot even admit that the Decalogue was enacted by him; while it is certain that all the elaborate ritual and code appertaining to the Levitical priesthood, to their service, etc., originated long after Moses, and even after the Exile.

We shall refer in other connections to some of the arguments by which this so-called "destructive" criticism seeks to justify its sweeping conclusions. At present it is enough to say that the arguments are, in our judgment, insufficient for their purpose. That there are more or less uncertain traditions in the early historical writings of the Old Testament, and that the authors of these writings followed, as a rule, the Semitic method of writing history, and so freely left conflicting narratives standing side by side, we have already seen to be true. It is doubtless also true that the writer of Chronicles shows a strong priestly bias, and generally reproduces the speech of the ancient prophets, without much attempt at exactness, but in his own fashion and language. Nor can it be claimed that his work has the same value and trustworthiness, as history, which belong to the work of the writers of First and Second Kings.

But after all necessary admissions are frankly made

in accordance with the evidence upon which they are all duly based, there is still sufficient ground left in history for maintaining a different view of the origin and early growth of the religion of Israel from that maintained by these so-called destructive critics. The language of the prophets of the eighth century B.C. implies the existence among the people, for a long time previously, of an historical revelation in its essential features like that described as made to the Patriarchs and to Moses. This language implies also the existence of a covenant-relation with Jehovah, and of a law including both moral and ritual enactments, upon the keeping or breaking of which the fate of this relation depended. Moreover, the biblical picture of the personality of Moses, and of the form of religion which bears his name, is quite too vivid and concrete to be easily resolved into fable and myth and results of priestly craft and tendencies. Once more: the evidence which is accumulating from sources outside of the Old Testament, from the monuments and records of ancient Assyria, Syria, and Egypt, is, on the whole, such as to answer many objections to the historical character of some of the earliest Hebrew narratives, and even in certain cases positively and directly to confirm these narratives.

The Christian reader of the Bible, who is unlearned in biblical historical criticism, will be obliged to leave the details of this important and rather heated controversy to the few expert students of such matters. Many of the questions which enter into the general controversy will remain for a long time unsettled; some of

them will probably never reach a satisfactory conclusion. It is not likely that we shall ever know precisely what are the facts with respect to the first beginnings and early stages of Old-Testament religion; or even to what extent some of the larger portions of certain Old-Testament historical writings can have their historical accuracy vindicated. Such a reader of the Bible should, however, at once adjust his faith in its truths, and his practical use of it to certain conclusions made tenable by modern biblical study; that is, his faith and usage should be made independent of the historical infallibility of all the historical writings of the Old Testament. He should hold loosely by any opinion as to the perfect truthfulness of these writings, in order that he may hold the more firmly to the essentials of his faith in biblical religion and in Jesus Christ. Faith in biblical religion and in Christ is in no respect dependent upon the perfect accuracy of the narratives of the Pentateuch, of Joshua or Judges, of Kings or of Chronicles. At the same time, it may confidently be affirmed that the foundations of fact upon which our religion is based—whether in its preparatory Old-Testament stages, or in its consummation in the person and work of the Redeemer—are in no wise shaken by the assaults of criticism.

Recent discoveries give to the student of the Bible the means for illustrating the historical credibility of certain biblical traditions so ancient even as those of the life of Abraham.* For example, the narrative of Genesis xiv. exhibits that patriarch in "the clear light of his

* D. S. S., i., p. 388 f.

tory." We know from sources outside of the Bible that "Kudur" was the name of several Elamite kings and "Laomer" the name of a divinity (hence, "Chedor-laomer"); and that, at about this time, Elam was probably extending its campaignings over the West. So do the separate incidents and historical setting of the narrative of Abraham in Egypt (if we except the calculated age of Sarah) appear true to the facts of history and show an accurate knowledge of Egyptian affairs.

The whole story of Joseph has so many marks (some of an obscure and subtle kind) of historical accuracy, that it cannot have been the work merely of imagination.* A careful student of Egyptian customs, Ebers, declares that this story contains "nothing which does not accurately correspond to a court of Pharaoh in the best times of the kingdom." Certain particulars which formerly, when our knowledge of affairs in ancient Egypt was less accurate than at present, were made objections to the credibility of the narrative, are now found to be true to life. For example, it was at one time affirmed that Joseph could not have had such free daily access, as he is represented as having, to the house and wife of Potiphar. But we now know that the intercourse of the sexes in Egypt was relatively very free; mixed company, even at feasts, was according to ancient Egyptian custom. Even the work of imagination in the narratives of the dreams of Pharaoh and of Potiphar is true to ancient life in Egypt.

That confirmation of the biblical narratives of Israel

* D. S. S., i., p. 390 f.

in Egypt or of the biblical history from the Exodus to the time of King David, which can be derived from sources outside of the Bible, is, indeed, not very extended. It concerns only a few particulars, and with regard to these, is not, as yet, thoroughly perfected. With the reigns of David and his successor the people of Jehovah come into more numerous connections with such surrounding nations as have left some record of their own affairs. Certain Phœnician sources apparently confirm the biblical narrative of the friendship of Hiram and Solomon. A number of incidental illustrations of the accuracy of the Old-Testament picture of the reign of this "magnificent" monarch of Israel might be brought forward. The biblical account of the flight of Jeroboam, the rebellious subject of Solomon, into Egypt and his stay with Shishak, also fits in well with the history derived from the monuments.

From the beginning of the reign of Shalmaneser onward (placed by Lenormant between 905 B.C. and 865 B.C.), the monuments of Assyria become repeatedly connected with the biblical history.* The annals of this Assyrian monarch acquaint us with Ahab's dreaded enemy, under the name of "Benhidri" of Damascus. "Ahab of Israel" is himself mentioned among the forces confederate against Assyria in the battle at Karkar. Hazael of Damascus appears upon these annals; and Jehu, too, under the title, "son of Omri." George Smith discovered in the monuments of the reign of Tiglath-Pileser no less than five names of Hebrew kings. One fragment represents the terror caused by the advance of

* D. S. S., i., p. 394 f.

the Assyrian army, and even mentions Ahaz by name; the names of both Pekah and Ahaz (see 2 Kings xvi. 7 f.) appear in the list of vassal kings who did homage to the Assyrian monarch. The annals of Sennacherib make us well acquainted with his doings; they represent him as capturing "forty-six walled towns and an infinite number of villages," as carrying away 200,150 persons, shutting up Hezekiah "like a bird in a cage," and frightening him into giving a tribute of thirty talents of gold and *eight* hundred of silver (see 2 Kings xviii. 13 f.). The monuments make eighteen years instead of eight (as does the biblical account) between the campaign in which Sargon captured Samaria and the one in which Sennacherib besieged Hezekiah; and they are probably correct in their chronology. A cylinder of baked clay informs us of Esarhaddon's reign. He attacked the kingdom of Judah, and when Manasseh resisted, conquered him, made him prisoner, and sent him to *Babylon*—as the statement of 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11 correctly affirms. For Esarhaddon, unlike the preceding monarchs, would naturally take his captives to this city instead of to Assyria. His inscriptions also represent Manasseh as a vassal king after having been restored to his throne.

The argument from these and other similar discoveries to the historical credibility of certain of the historical books of the Old Testament, in order to preserve its real force, must not be overstrained. The argument is valid only to show the general historical credibility of these writings; it does not, *of itself*, show their sacredness or their inspiration, or even their complete accuracy in historical details. The correspondence of the accounts

given by the Hebrew writers with those given by the ancient painted walls or cylinders of baked clay or papyrus-rolls, does not, *of itself*, prove either source of information to be sacred or inspired. And in case of a conflict between the two kinds of sources we are to decide which is probably correct, to the best of our ability, and in accordance with rules familiar to all critical students of history. For both the sacred history and the so-called profane history are entitled to fair treatment; and if the latter can confirm the former in so many cases, there is no good reason why it should not correct it in some particulars.

We turn now from the histories of the Old Testament to those of the New. In doing this we advance several centuries out of the mists of a far-off antiquity, the annals of which were often prepared by men remotely separated in place and time from the events themselves, into the much clearer light of the Christian era and of Palestine in that era. Moreover, we have narratives which, in their essential features, bring Jesus before us as He appeared to the selected eye- and ear-witnesses, His disciples.

One question concerning the Gospel history is alone of supreme importance, is vital to Christianity itself. Do the four Evangelists enable us to construct such a picture of the life and doctrine of Jesus, a picture so complete and historically defensible, that it may be confidently appealed to as defining the object of our faith? Whether all their discrepancies in details—or whether any of them—can be reconciled, is a matter of comparatively little account. It is not, in every sense of the

word, necessary to make out that the writer of Matthew or of Mark or of Luke was historically "infallible"; or to decide which one of the three writers is to be trusted in case they are found to disagree upon some matters of detail. It is necessary, however, to consider whether the picture of our Lord, in which all the Gospels essentially agree, is a faithful picture; for it is to the personality of *that* Lord, and not to any mythical or fictitious character, that our faith is attached. We shall, then, briefly examine the general historical credibility of the Gospels;* for more of details the reader must resort to the apologetic literature in which Christianity is so remarkably rich. For if the four histories of the Evangelists have been often and violently attacked, they have been as often, with warm devotion and great wealth of scholarship, defended. To say that they are not only unharmed by all such attacks, but are more strongly supported by facts and arguments to-day than ever before, does not, by any means, overstate the truth.

It is undoubtedly those narratives of miracles which the Gospels contain that have given the principal grounds for denying the historical character and substantial historical accuracy of the Gospels at large. Before any genuine historical criticism had arisen, Deism refused, on grounds of a general denial of the supernatural, to credit the miracles of the Gospels. The history of biblical criticism since it arose shows us that the critics are accustomed to divide over this question of the supernatural into two schools: one of which tends to destroy and the other to preserve the general histori-

* D. S. S., i., p. 375 f.

cal credibility of the picture of Jesus Christ presented in the Gospels. As to which of these two schools is justified in its position, we do not hesitate to pronounce. The picture which the Evangelists give of our Lord is not to be discredited because it represents Him as a worker of miracles. It is just this working of miracles which we should expect of Him as the revealer of the Father, as the Lord of life, as the Saviour of man.

We have no sources other than the Gospels and collateral New-Testament writings themselves upon which we can rely to any extent to supplement or to correct the picture of Christ presented by these writings.* What Josephus is made by the present copies of his manuscript to say about the founder of Christianity is doubtless spurious. The apocryphal lives of Jesus have no independent value; they do not contain a single really valuable and trustworthy tradition which is not found in the Gospels. But these apocryphal writings do afford us a strong, indirect argument for the historical trustworthiness and inspiration of the Gospels. The apocryphal writings put into our Lord's mouth various declarations about heathen deities, idolatry, His mission to the under-world, etc.—questions which the Christian Church was interested in having Him answer, but about which the Gospels, in their fidelity to the historical truth, have not a word to say.

The noble simplicity and lofty spiritual tone of the writings of our Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, when placed in contrast with the apocryphal Gospels, make a marked impression upon the thoughtful and sym-

* D. S. S., i., p. 377 f.

pathetic reader. The general impression is undoubtedly one of confidence that the writers, being men of the Christian spirit in its higher manifestations, are narrating the truth as they understood it upon the testimony of the earlier eye- and ear-witnesses, the apostles themselves.

In considering the essential truthfulness and genuine historical character of the Gospels, it is necessary to consider also the nature of their construction and the way they came to have the form they now bear. Upon this subject more will be said in another connection. It is enough at present to call attention to the fact that the very constitution of the first three Gospels is such as to imply considerable previous sifting of materials and a work of recording the different existing traditions.

The Gospels are not continuous and flowing narratives of the life of Jesus Christ; they are rather collections of those deeds and sayings which the first preachers of Christianity had often referred to in holding up before their hearers the true picture of that Messiah who invited their faith. Hence we find in them certain short written notices of the discourses of the Lord. Sometimes these notices have attached, and sometimes they have not, a narrative of the circumstances in which the discourses were uttered. The Gospels also contain the shorter or longer accounts of the deeds of Jesus, especially of those miracles which had been grouped together in reality or in the preaching of the apostles. We find that all this material was selected and used by each Evangelist according to a plan of his own, and was

shaped by that idea of the mission and work of Christ which appeared prominent to the mind of each. Al. the Evangelists agree, however, in giving with greater detail and more manifest interest the momentous facts and sayings connected with His death and resurrection. It was *these* facts and sayings which the eye- and ear-witnesses had of course made prominent in their proclamation of the Gospel.

This picture of Jesus Christ, healing the sick, teaching the things of the kingdom as appertaining especially to His own Messianic work, crucified of man, and raised from the dead by the power of God so as to appear, by infallible proofs, to many witnesses, has, therefore, all the evidence that comes from its being repeatedly and accurately drawn by those who were, at first hand, familiar with the historical facts.

It should also be made obvious that the Epistles of Paul and of the other apostles confirm the concurrent testimony of the Gospels. The Epistles assume, rather than rehearse, the history of Christ's life. Paul must have been minutely acquainted with the facts and words of this life. His account of the last supper, and of the appearances of our Lord after the resurrection, is in substantial accord with that of the Evangelists; yet this account shows so much information independent of the sources they used as to strengthen greatly their testimony. It is through Paul—one might think almost by a mere chance—that we learn "to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." What is true of the writings

of Paul, is also true of all the other writings of the New Testament; they all presuppose an extensive and well-established knowledge of the great facts narrated in the Gospels. The speeches of the early preachers of Christianity, which the Book of Acts records, rehearse the same facts. As to *these* facts, then, there is a complete agreement of all the witnesses.

It is not, indeed, all parts of even the first three Gospels which can summon to their support this entire body of concurrent testimony. But the testimony is strongest just where we should expect, from the very nature of the case, that it would be so, and just where in its relation to our faith we should desire to have it so. As to the essential elements and features of His life,*—His preparation for His work, His earliest miracles and teaching in Galilee, and especially the events about the time of His death,—there is a marked agreement. The narrative of His childhood, as given by only two of the Evangelists, and not otherwise referred to in the New-Testament writings, must, of course, be placed on a somewhat different footing, so far as the amount of historical evidence supporting it is concerned. Yet the substantial truthfulness of the traditions of the childhood of Jesus admits of proof.

The difference in the picture which the Evangelist John draws of the person and work of our Lord, when compared with the concurrent picture of the other three Evangelists, has long been the occasion of doubt as to the trustworthiness of our knowledge of His person and work. This difference, it must be admitted, is remark-

* D. S. S., i., p. 381 f.

able and difficult to explain. But it is not such as to warrant either the rejection of the Fourth Gospel as the work of the apostle John, or the sceptical conclusion that we can form no true picture of Jesus in harmony with the accounts of *all* four Gospels. On the contrary, if the writer of the Fourth Gospel was the apostle John (and that he was will be shown later on), this Gospel is by an eye-witness and a most intimate and beloved friend and follower of Christ. It was undoubtedly written late in the life of the apostle. It contains the results of his loving reflections for many years over the things he remembered concerning his Lord. It gives an interior view, so to speak, of the character of Jesus and of His unique relations to God and to man.

It is not so strange, then, that the Gospel of John contains in all only four particulars touching the entire public ministry of Jesus in Galilee; of these four, only two (the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the sea) are given in the first three Gospels. In these two accounts there is nothing surprisingly different from the other narratives of His deeds, whether we give most emphasis to the account of John or to that of the other three. There are two points of history, however, about which the Fourth and the other Gospels seem to disagree: these are, the question whether our Lord confined His activity to Jerusalem previous to the last passover, and the question with respect to the date of the last supper and of His death. If we should admit that this disagreement is real and irreconcilable, it is more likely that the Fourth Gospel is in the right.

It would not be strange were the other Evangelists ignorant of the fact that Jesus visited Jerusalem repeatedly at the feasts; and, with respect to the events just preceding the crucifixion, we should suppose that the beloved disciple would know beyond doubt, since he was present and took part in them.

It is with regard to the character of the *discourses* of Christ that the difference between the Gospel of John and the other Gospels is most strongly marked. How marked this difference is we shall consider when we come to speak of the authorship of this Gospel. But there is every reason to suppose that Christ held many lengthy discourses with the people and with His disciples which have not been even referred to in the collection of traditions used by the early preachers of Christianity. The report which the apostle who heard these discourses gives of them is undoubtedly *his* report of the way he has remembered and understood the discourses; it has, as we should say, a "Johannean" color or cast. But it is for this very reason to be regarded as the report of one who knew his Lord most intimately; and who, by long communing with His spirit, was best fitted to penetrate the inmost meaning of His words.

The Fourth Gospel does not, then, destroy or radically change the historical picture of Jesus as given by the other three Evangelists; it rather supplements that picture with certain true and more ideal aspects of both His life and His doctrine. We should not for a moment think of maintaining that our conception of Him would be truer to the reality if we had no account of Him through the apostle John; on the contrary,

much that is most essential to a true conception is most beautifully and richly given by the loving hand of this portrait-painter.

The position that we have the picture of Jesus Christ as an historical person given in a most trustworthy way by His sacred biographers is in no respect shaken by recognizing the fact that many minute verbal and other discrepancies exist in the Evangelists. Much interest has been taken, and great debate held, over the proper way of "reconciling" these discrepancies. No objection is to be made to such an exercise in Christian apologetics when it is undertaken and carried on in the spirit of candor and with due regard for all the established laws of historical criticism. But we must confess that we have little taste for it. Moreover, we regard its results as of comparatively little importance. Such so-called "reconciliations" do little toward lighting up the true life and doctrine of Jesus, or toward confirming our Christian faith. Nor is it necessary to accomplish this work of reconciliation, or to admit that it can be successfully accomplished, in order to hold a true view of the inspiration and authority of the New-Testament writings. On the contrary, it is quite enough for such a view that the Gospels should be treated, with respect to the reconciliation of their discrepancies, just as we treat those honest and competent witnesses who bring us information regarding other historical matters.

We do not think it important that the witnesses should agree perfectly in all details, in order either to establish their reputation for thorough honesty and

competency, or to convince us of the truthfulness of what they narrate. Surely it should be considered a great and intolerable burden for our beloved Evangelists to bear, that their credibility must be maintained by forcing a complete agreement between them in respect to historical minutiæ. Is their inspiration to be recognized only in case it secures perfect freedom from all those mistakes to which every other writer of history is constantly liable? The existence of discrepancies and of historical errors in the Gospels is, then, to be acknowledged, in the most fearless and frank manner, whenever it is pointed out. Such an acknowledgment does not, in the least, damage or obscure our confidence in their general historical credibility and accuracy, as well as in their inspiration.

That minute verbal and other discrepancies do exist in the Evangelists can be shown in great detail;* but the task is not one in which a Christian student of the Bible feels pleasure in engaging. What difference does it make, for example, with the impression made or doctrine conveyed by that awful scene where Jesus dies on the cross, if Mark tells us that the drink offered to Him was "wine mingled with myrrh," and Matthew, that it was wine "mingled with gall"? What difference, again, if we are unable to say which one of the four forms in which the inscription over Him was written is verbally correct? How is our confidence in the inspiration of either of the three Evangelists affected by noting that the first (Matt. x. 9 f.) makes Jesus instruct the twelve on their trial journey to take "nor

* D. S. S., i., p. 400 f.

shoes, nor staff"; while the second makes Him instruct them (Mark vi. 8 f.) to go "shod with sandals," but take nothing "save a staff only"; and the third (Luke ix. 3) makes Him forbid the "staff" while not mentioning the sandals?

Nor does the existence of more important historical discrepancies and doubtful statements impair the claim of the Gospels to inspiration; for this claim does not repose in, or serve as guarantee for, their historical infallibility. That it is perfectly impossible to construct a chronology of the life of our Lord in harmony with the accounts of all the Evangelists the whole course of such efforts has made as clear as such a matter can be. This statement applies to many details in the life. For example, in Luke (see v. 1–11) the sequence can be distinctly traced *backward* from the call of the apostles to the healing of Peter's wife's mother, and in Matthew and Mark it can be traced just as distinctly *forward* from this call to the same act of healing.

Certain apparent errors in historical matters which occur in the New Testament may doubtless be referred to lapses of memory in the writers. That Paul did not for a moment consider a faulty memory with regard to some particulars inconsistent with inspired expression his own confession shows (see 1 Cor. i. 14–16). Not infrequently a defective memory exhibits itself in quoting from the Old Testament its facts or words. For example, we find Matthew in one place (xxvii. 9) actually quoting from Zechariah, but by a lapse of memory ascribing the quotation to Jeremiah; and in another place (xxiii. 35), speaking of the murdered

prophet as the "son of Barachiah," when he was, according to Chronicles, really the son of Jehoiada.

In the matter of genealogies, numbers, dates, and sequence of time, it is particularly difficult and, indeed, quite impossible to maintain the perfect accuracy of the writings of the Old and New Testaments. The genealogies of our Lord, given by Matthew and Luke, have a claim to an historical character only on the supposition that they were extracted from certain registers, probably of a public kind. The only other supposition is that both genealogies were revealed to the Evangelists throughout. Now, there is not a particle of proof that the inspiration of Matthew and Luke was designed to such an end, or that it would actually enable them to correct any inaccuracies which might exist in these registers. Indeed, let us for a moment suppose them to have undertaken to correct the public registers. The effect would have been to bring upon them the suspicion of having tampered with a record, and to throw doubt over their entire claim that Jesus was the son of David. As honest and inspired men it would never have occurred to them to alter the record of the registers.

The historical truthfulness of the genealogies of Jesus given by the Evangelists is, therefore, dependent upon the accuracy of the registers from which they got the genealogies. But it is impossible to harmonize the two genealogies throughout unless we adopt the absurd assumption that all our Lord's ancestors from David onward had two names. It should be remembered, however, that the only important truth with which the

genealogies are concerned—namely, His Davidic descent—is not dependent upon the accuracy of all the details of the registers.

Many other illustrations might be given of the general truth that neither the historical trustworthiness nor the inspiration of the biblical writers is impaired, in any essential particular, by the discovery and admission of historical discrepancies and errors in their writings; but we forbear, and pursue no farther such invidious and comparatively unimportant considerations. By calling such considerations "comparatively unimportant" it is not meant that students of the Bible should desist from its most minute and patient study, with respect to historical as well as to all other details. But the reconciliation of these discrepancies and the vindication of the sacred writers against all errors in historical minutiæ, are weighty matters only in the eyes of one who, by a wrong and dangerous theory of inspiration, makes them weighty. For the true view of the Bible it is comparatively unimportant whether such reconciliation and vindication can be effected, or not. We do not believe that it can always be effected, or that it should in any case be insisted upon. And, on the whole, the history of biblical study clearly shows that the confidence of men in the historical character and inspiration of sacred Scripture has far oftener been impaired by the subterfuges to which the attempt at "reconciliation" and "vindication" has driven them, than it would have been by a frank and fearless confession of the exact state of the case.

On leaving this subject it is desirable briefly to pre-

sent the conclusions which the previous examination supports. A most valuable and essential part of the Bible is its historical contents. Christianity is an historical religion; it centres in and grounds itself upon an historical character, upon a person who lived and taught and died here upon the earth, in the presence of men and at a definite period of human history. Old-Testament religion, considered in itself and also as preparatory for Christianity, is an historical religion. Its revelation is a progressive and historical affair; essential elements of it are certain great events that happened and institutions that were founded in the history of Israel. The Bible gives us the record of this history. If it did not do this, it would not present to us the truth of our religion, the truth of the Christian revelation in both its preparatory and its crowning stages. What we as Christians need is not, primarily and chiefly, talk about Christ; but Jesus Christ the person, Himself brought to us as He was in His living and dying, that He may be the object of our faith, and that His spiritual presence may be realized in our thought and conduct. Hence the supreme importance that we should have a full and trustworthy historical picture of who Jesus was; of how God made the world ready for His coming and for the reception of His truth; and of how He actually manifested Himself to those selected and inspired followers who knew Him best. History and doctrine are joined in fact and in fate within the biblical narratives. God has joined them together; man cannot put them asunder.

Moreover, we find that fair yet thorough criticism

leaves the historical basis of our religious faith unimpaired. Nay more, it establishes this basis in a scientific manner and defends it against the assaults of its foes. It shows that the picture which the Gospels present of the life and death, of the character and teaching, of Jesus Christ, is essentially trustworthy. It also shows that the picture presented in the Gospels is the same as the picture assumed and explained by the genuine writings of the apostles in the form of letters to the early churches. This verifying work of historical criticism is most satisfactory and complete just where it is most essential to our faith to have it so; that is, at and about the central facts of the Gospel.

The genuine historical character of all the books and passages of the Old Testament which apparently claim to be historical cannot, in like manner, be established. The earliest histories of sacred Scripture, like all other most ancient historical composition, begin in traditions which it is difficult to verify, and in which it is impossible always to separate the true from the false. The earliest Hebrew traditions so closely resemble those of certain other ancient nations as to show some common root. The primitive method of composing history among the Hebrews was not such as to guarantee that care had been taken to arrive at what we should now consider strictly historical truth.

At intervals later in the course of Hebrew history, examples of uncertain traditions not infrequently appear. But in time we come upon the more solid and trustworthy basis of a literary record contemporaneous, or nearly so, with the events themselves. Yet the admission of facts like the foregoing does not en-

danger the historical foundation upon which rests our faith. It does not prevent the general confidence we feel in the substantially true historical record which the Old Testament contains of the origin and growth of biblical religion, and of the way in which God, in the preparatory stages of His revelation, made Himself known as the Redeemer of man. Only it *is* necessary for the student of Hebrew religion in its historical unfolding to make discriminations. All the historical accounts in the Bible are not alike certain. Trained and well-equipped scholars will have to do the best they can, by use of all the means at their disposal, to tell us what was the exact order and what the characteristics of the different stages of biblical revelation.

We have no claim to historical infallibility set up within the Bible, or even to unusual freedom from errors of an historical kind. Neither does it appear that God has ever revealed to men the exact character and order of past events where no record of the events themselves has been kept. For their facts the sacred authors of the biblical histories appear always to have been dependent upon the ordinary resources. Some things of their own time they witnessed for themselves, or learned from others who had witnessed them; other things they accepted as currently reported. There were traditions, oral and written, which claimed to give an account of what had taken place in the more remote past. The later writers had for use the documents and books composed by the earlier ones. The biblical historians possessed, in brief, just such kinds of sources of information with respect to previous events as ancient historians generally pos-

sessed. But they possessed an unusual wealth of these resources, because the nation early began to have some appreciation of the significance of the history it was enacting, and of the relations in which it stood to God. Moreover, the biblical writers show in general that fine insight into, and sympathy with, the higher meaning of events, which led them to purify from debasing moral and religious ideas the historical material they employed, and to appreciate the value of what was being enacted and recorded.

It is in such spiritual insight and sympathy that the inspiration of the biblical historians chiefly consists. There is an important truth involved in the fact that the later Jews regarded their great historical books as having been the work of *prophets*. And our choicest and most authentic information concerning the history of Israel before and after the Exile comes from the prophetic books, as we now call them.

The histories of the New Testament—pre-eminently the Gospels, but also the Book of Acts—show by their very nature that they were written by men who had the gift of the Holy Ghost. So to enter into the spirit and form of the Gospel, and of the life and doctrine of Him who is the Gospel, as do the writers of these histories—this is to be inspired. In what their inspiration consisted, both the Prologue of Luke's Gospel and the closing words of John's Gospel, suggest; but that it was not thought of by themselves as giving any guarantee of historical accuracy without a diligent search and careful handling of their historical material, the language of Luke's Prologue plainly implies.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE.

THERE can be no doubt that the prophets of the Old Testament claimed, on the authority of divine revelations made to them, to predict future events. It is just as obvious that the writers of the New Testament (followed in this particular by all the early Church) claimed that these Old-Testament prophets had indeed foreseen and foretold the things of Christ. In this age of the world it is not customary to rely so much upon any proofs afforded to the reality of the Christian religion, and to the divine mission of its author, by the ancient prophecies concerning Him. We are inclined rather to rely upon the accordance of our religion with all the present mental life and religious needs of man. But the one proof most frequently urged in many of the early Christian writings, whether of the New Testament or of the Church Fathers, is the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy by Christ. Moreover, the *Messianic* truth of the Hebrew Bible is so essentially predictive, and the doctrine of the New Testament regarding the person and work of Messiah is so involved in the predictions, that it is impossible completely to separate the two.

The general fact just referred to does not, of itself, enable us to settle any one of several puzzling questions

which at once arise. In what sense and with what precision and certainty, and from what sources of information, did the genuine Hebrew prophet make his predictions? The author of Isaiah xlii. 9, sang: "New things do I declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them." His "new song" was of the wonderful salvation which Jehovah would bring to Israel. But did the prophet clearly foreknow what the nature of the divine deliverance would be? *How* did he foreknow what he foreknew? Was it because he sagaciously saw the future as lying in the present; or was it because his faith led him to put implicit confidence in God as making his redemption suitable to the particular circumstances of his own time; or was it because God had, in a wholly supernatural way, raised the vail from before His servant's eyes and allowed to him a forward glance into what was hidden from all others? It is obvious that these and other similar questions cannot be answered merely by affirming our general confidence in the scriptural view of prophecy.

The nature of prediction as one element of genuine prophecy must be understood in accordance with our conception of prophecy in general. Now there are two extreme views upon this matter, one of which designs to deprive biblical prophecy of all its supernatural character, and the other of which aims at making it all, as far as possible, strictly supernatural or even miraculous. The former considers the so-called "predictions" of the prophets as merely fortunate premonitions or shrewd calculations, such as frequently occur in all ages of the world. The other thinks it necessary, in order to vindi

cate the inspired character of prophecy, that its predictions should all be regarded as direct divine revelations of individual future events—definite and infallible as to time, place, and concomitant circumstances. Neither of these views is correct; neither accords with the view of the biblical writers or with the facts and phenomena of biblical prophecy. For the genuine Hebrew prophet is neither, on the one hand, a shrewd calculator of political and social probabilities; nor is he, on the other hand, an announcer of definite future events on the occurrence of which, precisely as foreseen, he stakes his prophetical reputation, after the manner of the heathen soothsayer.*

The consideration of the character of the Old-Testament prophecies is especially important, of course, whenever such prophecies concern Messiah and the Messianic kingdom. Indeed, it is the origin, growth, and application of the great Messianic ideas in Hebrew prophecy which contribute to it its supreme interest and value. Were it not for these the predictions of Hebrew seers would not be distinguishable from those of heathen soothsayers. But these ideas existing, developing, and being fulfilled in Christ, as they are seen to have been, the question as to whether the Hebrew prophets ever miscalculated or not, becomes relatively unimportant.

And now let us consider how the predictions of the genuine Hebrew prophet grew out of his very character and mission as a prophet. It was of the very essence of the prophet's character to think and feel for Jehovah and with Jehovah, to enter into Jehovah's plans in righteousness, truth, and grace. It was his mission to

* D. S. S., i., p. 417 f.

tell the people what it concerned them to know of the divine plans, as bearing upon the punishment of the wrongdoer, the comfort and succor of the saint, and the unfolding of the kingdom of redemption. His prediction is not, then, a mere prognostication of individual events; it is a power of foreseeing the unfolding of the divine plan. It may be said, then, to be a part of the prophetic spiritual life. The prediction of the prophet is also a divine work within the soul of the prophet—a work of revelation that results from the planting and growth within the soul of certain great moral and religious ideas. These ideas necessarily limit and give direction to the predictions; they prevent the prophet from making certain mistakes to which he would otherwise be liable. He cannot predict blessing as the fruit of sin; he cannot promise well to those whose unfaithfulness to God and the principles of righteous conduct calls for punishment. Only the false prophet on whom, for this reason, the woe of Jehovah must fall, can foretell blessings to come as the wages of sin.

The faith of the Hebrew prophet was firm as to the future stability of the great principles of the divine government. Hence he threatened and promised in the four following ways: he threatened Israel for its own sins against the divine covenant; he threatened other nations for standing in the way of the divine kingdom, which he regarded as centred in Israel; he promised comfort and salvation to the faithful remnant, Messianic blessings to the redeemed nation; he promised to other nations a share in this blessing, and to all mankind the fruition of the perfected, divine kingdom. His predic

tion is very different, therefore, from the utterance of an inevitable and blind fate; it is a declaration of the will of a living and personal God.

That their predictions were *conditional** upon the future conduct of men was well understood by the Hebrew prophets themselves. The repentance and prayers of David, when Nathan predicted the death of his child, assume the possibility of a change in the purpose of Jehovah respecting the outcome of the whole matter. When the "word of the Lord" had threatened the most awful punishment upon Ahab and upon all that was his, a subsequent prophetic message announced a change in the divine plan because of the humbling of the wicked king under the former prediction (see 1 Kings xxi. 20 f.). The prophet Amos represents himself as having turned aside the expressly threatened judgment of God by his own importunate prayers. Jeremiah expressly states (xviii. 7 f.) that the predictions of divine retribution made by the prophets are not unconditional; while Ezekiel treats the same truth in detail throughout two entire chapters of his book (xviii. and xxxiii.). Jonah even complains of the Lord as though his own prophetic utterances had been left in the lurch, as it were, on account of the greatness of the divine mercy.

A very striking instance of this "conditional" character of much of the Hebrew prophesying is found when Micah (see iii. 12) predicts that the approaching Assyrian army will leave Zion "plowed as a field," and Jerusalem in heaps; but Isaiah (chaps. xxxvi. and xxxvii.) narrates the secondary causes which prevented the fulfilment of

* D. S. S., i., p. 429 f.

the prediction, while Jeremiah (xxvi. 18) ascribes its failure to the repentance of Hezekiah and to the divine change of plan in view of this. Now it is not likely that his experience in predicting what did not turn out precisely so, because the conditions were meantime changed, caused any feeling of embarrassment to the prophet Micah. And, indeed, why should it have this effect? Who could be more glad than the prophet, to have the repentance of the king defeat the exact fulfilment of his own threat? Doubtless the prophet well knew that, in any event, it was his business to *predict* and not to *fix* what Jehovah would do; and that when the consequences of wrong- and right-doing are the subjects of prediction, space for repentance and change of human conduct, and for a corresponding change of the divine procedure, can never be absolutely excluded.

We also find that biblical prediction is not such a foretelling of the future as escapes all historical limitations, and would render real "history" impossible. A great body of definite and absolute predictions, applying to particular persons and circumstances at precise dates, would prevent a course of history that is in any degree dependent upon human freedom. But such definite and absolute predictions are exceedingly rare in Hebrew prophecy.* Precise dates for future events are not often given; the exact names of the agents in events predicted, scarcely ever. Names like Immanuel, Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi, El-gibbor, and other similar names, are of a general and symbolic character, and carry their own explanation with them. Even the

*D. S. S., 1., p. 430f.

name of "Cyrus," in Isaiah (xliv. 28 f.), is used as a title of the Persian monarchs in general.

The dates of prophecy are usually given in indefinite phrases or round numbers. We are told that the day of Jehovah is "at hand," that the threatened event is "near" or will happen in "a little while," or that the trouble expected will last many years. In the perspective of prophetic vision nothing is more uncertain than the exact time, as all students of prophecy are in the habit of observing. Even in the case where the definite number of three years or of one year is mentioned (as in Isaiah xvi. 14 and xxi. 16), it is at once rendered indefinite again by adding "as the years of a hireling" —that is, scant measure. There is no more important and apparently definite prediction of an exact period of time to be found in Hebrew prophecy than that given by Jeremiah for the length of the captivity; it is to be *seventy* years. This prophecy is frequently spoken of in the Bible as fulfilled with respect to the time predicted. And yet the most exact calculation of the actual length of the captivity cannot well make it more than sixty-eight years; that is to say, the number "seventy" is to be understood in a common-sense way as a round number. The time of those great events, such as the "day of Jehovah," the day of "salvation," the coming and reign of Messiah, was always indefinite and obscure in the mind of the Hebrew prophet. This truth is recognized in the New Testament. The ancient seers searched "what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto" (see 1 Peter i. 10).

It should be observed also that each prophet is influenced, with respect to the particular form in which he presents the great ideas common to all the prophets, by his individual experiences and by the events of his own time. His predictions were made in concrete form. The day of Jehovah's wrath was conceived of as at hand in a different way according to the changes occurring in the circumstances of the nation's history. Thus Isaiah threatened with the Assyrians and Jeremiah with the Chaldeans. Joel connected the general divine judgment with the repeated visitations of locusts, and the general divine spiritual blessing with the return of certain Jews who had been sold as slaves by the Phœnicians. Each prophet saw the events of the future as forecast in his experience of the present course of Jehovah's dealings with the people. In this way the predictions were adapted both to stir and to benefit the men of their own immediate present.

It is therefore absolutely indispensable for a correct understanding of Hebrew prophecy to remember that the conception of Messianic salvation, and the promise of divine redemption, did not come to the people or their prophets all at once and as a finished product; it grew with them, under abiding divine influences, as a living organism. Every prophet came into the inheritance of a store of religious ideas which belonged to the theocratic development of the nation. These ideas were in large measure his means of inspiration. He dwelt upon them; he embraced them with devotion; he lived in their spiritual presence. And God's Spirit, moving in his soul, gave to him certain new and enlarged

glimpses of what God was going to do for Israel and for the world by bringing in the Messianic salvation.

As we study the different prophets and prophecies we find that this circle of great and inspiring ideas changes its form.* Some of the early prophets scarcely show by a single word that they ascribe any religious significance and authority to the ceremonial laws; others of a later date make much more of the ritualistic and priestly elements of the Jewish religion. With Joel the conception of Messianic salvation is that of a people, all prophetic and filled with Jehovah's Spirit. With Amos it is the conception of the Davidic kingdom restored to the prosperity of its best days. Hosea includes in his picture the conversion of Ephraim and the turning of its allegiance to the ancient royal house. But Zechariah predicts a personal Messianic king; and this king is further exalted by Isaiah and Micah. Jeremiah adds the priestly element to the character of the Messiah.

In order to comprehend more fully the nature of Hebrew prophecy, it is necessary to notice the answers which the prophets give to the following three questions:† In what does the Messianic salvation consist? Who shall share in this salvation? Who will introduce this salvation? These questions are constantly being raised and considered afresh by this remarkable succession of inspired seers, the prophets of the Old Testament. In the answers they give to these questions we find certain elements that have a more spiritual character

* D. S. S., i., p. 434 f. † D. S. S., i., p. 435 f.

and reference to Christ blended with those that have reference to a temporal reign of Israel.

In the Hebrew prophetic view of the Messianic kingdom material prosperity and spiritual blessings are commonly united in one picture. When we read of the extraordinary fruitfulness of the soil during the prevalence of this kingdom—how the waste places of Canaan will become like a fertile garden—of the multiplication of Israelites, and the lengthening of their lives so that young and old together crowd the sacred gates and streets, of the abounding peace, safety, and righteousness, we are not to understand these words as mere figures of speech. The prophets really supposed that the coming of Messianic salvation would include all this for the nation of Israel. In the minds of the later prophets the time of this salvation was, of course, connected with the deliverance of the nation from oppression and exile under a foreign power. This state of things must cease; then just beyond lay the coming of God's glorious kingdom. In its very nature, therefore, the kingdom involved the triumph of the Jews over their enemies or, at least, their deliverance from them, their return from exile, and their dwelling yet again as a nation on the hallowed soil of Canaan.

All the prophets of this great era construct their picture of the Messianic salvation in such a manner as to include and make prominent the same features. In how wonderfully beautiful and impressive language does that prince among all Israel's prophets set forth the triumphant and glorious return from exile of his nation (Isaiah xl.–lxvi.)! But the brilliant expecta-

tions which found expression in the earlier pictures of the condition of restored Israel were never realized. This the prophecies of the latest books plainly acknowledge. Yet Zechariah, and Haggai, and Malachi, and Daniel, still foresee the good time coming, and welcome it as near at hand. And when it really came, but not with observation or in the precise form in which the ancient seers had predicted it, many pious Jews were still looking for its coming. Indeed, there are Christians in the present time who are waiting to see prophecies fulfilled strictly according to the earliest forms which have already been more than accomplished in a far higher form.

The answer which Hebrew prophecy gave to the question, Who shall share in the expected Messianic salvation? was also a varying one, as respects the precise form given to it by different prophets. Some of them, especially the earlier ones, took a less liberal view than others of Messianic salvation as affecting the Gentiles. Joel considers that the awful day of divine retribution will fall upon Phœnicians, Philistines, Egyptians, and Edomites, so that they can no more oppress Israel and the latter can dwell unmolested in the land.

But the view that the future salvation of Israel will somehow include all nations constantly gained ground in the Hebrew prophecies. Isaiah and Micah are among the first (perhaps the first) to proclaim universal salvation; but Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, and Zechariah, predict it as well. Redeemed Israel, they hold, is to bless all the nations of the earth, to shine as a light on all the heathen. A wide and deep stream of

healing is to flow from the temple of Jehovah. Egypt is to be converted, Assyria numbered among the Lord's host, and the wealth of Tyre consecrated to Him. He will give pure lips and docile hearts to the Gentiles and take away the vail that covers the face of all peoples. How does this wide, generous, and noble outlook over the universe of men, lighting them all up in the glowing imagery with which the conception of the Messianic salvation is made to shine, put to shame the narrow hopes and dogmas of many Christian teachers and preachers of the present generation! No service in holy literature has ever been greater than that rendered by the glowing heart and pen of the Hebrew prophet who has administered unceasing cheer and comfort to all believers by declaring the "servant of Jehovah" as sunshine, righteousness, and salvation, alike for Jews and Gentiles. "It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

Who, then, shall introduce this glorious Messianic salvation? The answer given to this question by Hebrew prophecy differed, in respect to its precise form, under the differing conditions and limitations of the individual prophets. For the revelation which God made of Himself to this nation was a progressive revelation. It was only at a comparatively late period of Hebrew prophecy that the answer to the question was found in the form of a conception of a personal Messiah. Such a conception did, however, come finally to

be formed and held in prophecy as a result of the spiritual movement so peculiar among this people. It is this conception that Christ proclaims Himself as answering to in all of its ideal features and elements; it is this Messianic prediction which He claims pre-eminently to make good and wholly to fulfil.

But it cannot be held that any of these great ancient seers foresaw the precise nature of the royal and priestly personage who should be king of Israel and of all nations, or understood clearly what would be the nature of his reign. How the elements of each particular time, with its accompanying circumstances, shaped each prophecy, may be seen in a very instructive way by studying the words of Isaiah in the seventh and immediately following chapters. A delivering king, called by the general name "Immanuel," is to be born. His birth will occur soon after Judah is delivered by Jehovah from the combined attacks of Israel and Syria (see Isa. vii. 16). He will suffer, together with all the people, the effects of the wasting of the land by the Egyptians and Assyrians, and will have to be nourished on the natural products of milk and honey (verses 17–25). Yet he will live to free the people from the Assyrian yoke (ix. 3 f.). The two kingdoms of Israel and Judah will be united under him, and will then subjugate the Philistines in the west and the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites in the east (xi. 1–11). So this prophet predicts. But the great Messianic king, Immanuel, did not come and save the people exactly at the time and in the manner which the Hebrew prophet predicted. He did come, however, so as to make good the inspired

character of his prophetic declaration and fulfil all its deeper meaning in a far higher and more effective way.

And now we must raise the difficult question as to whether the Hebrew prophecies came true—that is, were fulfilled—and in what sense they were fulfilled. It is obvious that the answer to the question of the truth of prophecy will depend upon what we understand by the "fulfilment" of prophecy. If we understand by it, in general, what Christ and the apostles understood when they held that He fulfilled every jot and tittle of Hebrew Scripture—that is, made good its higher significance and showed in reality what God intended it all to point forward to—then we may confidently answer this question affirmatively. But if by the fulfilment of prophecy we mean the exact happening in all its details of what the prophets thought was going to happen, then we must give another answer to the inquiry; then we must say that some of their predictions were only partially fulfilled and others not at all.

The remark last made may fitly be illustrated by several examples. In chapter vii. of Isaiah, the prophet predicts the downfall of Israel and Syria within a period of three or four years, the prediction being made at a time when these nations were conspicuously strong in their combined enterprises. Now, if we do not unwarrantably press the word "forsaken" so as to make it refer to a more complete desolation than really occurred, we must admit that here is a marked instance of a specific prediction fulfilled within the period allotted. The same prophet also foretells (x. 12, 16–19, 24–34, and elsewhere) a sudden and overwhelming disaster to

a particular Assyrian enterprise, and attributes the disaster to the particular cause of rumors of a revolt occurring in the land of Assyria. The event happened substantially as it was foretold.

Jeremiah, too, apparently before the Chaldeans had made themselves independent of Assyria, or could be looked upon as a political power dangerous to Palestine, threatened Judah with this enemy from the North.* He also subsequently announced the desolation of Jerusalem, the temple, and all the land by the same force. The same prophet predicted the deportation of the nation, their long captivity in Babylon, and their subsequent return from exile, in a manner that cannot well be reconciled with any theory of mere calculation.

The same thing is true of the precise declaration of Amos (i. 3–5), that "the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir." As one of the leading opponents of the supernatural in the religious history of Israel admits, this last prediction must have been written at least "about half a century before the Syrian-Ephraimite war." To resort to a theory of "remarkable coincidences" and "shrewd calculation" is unwarrantable, when everything shows that such examples of prophetic foresight as the foregoing, were the direct effect in the minds of the prophets, of those feelings and ideas regarding Jehovah's plans with which they were inspired. On the other hand it cannot be claimed that the inspiration of the prophet consisted in giving him, ready made as it were, a picture of future events in correct form as respects time, place, and circumstances; or that

* See chapters i. 13 f., iv. 5 f., vi. 1–5, and D. S. S., i., p. 421.

such inspiration guaranteed in all particulars the correctness of this form. Even in the case of the most grand and complete Messianic prophecies, the inspiration of the prophet was not, as a rule, of such a kind. Accordingly, we find faulty elements entering into the conception which conveys the ideal truth. This fact is virtually acknowledged over and over again by the New-Testament writers. They are no more occupied in insisting upon the infallible form and literal fulfilment of the ancient Hebrew prophecies regarding Messiah than upon the infallible form and literal accuracy of the ancient Hebrew histories. They recognize the fact, which we must not fail to recognize, that the King, the Priest, the Anointed of the Lord, the suffering servant of Jehovah, the mighty Hero and Prince of Peace, was not precisely such an one as the prophets had expected. Nor was His kingdom, either in its nature or in the method of its coming, precisely such as they had predicted it. But to say this is equivalent to admitting the mistake and failure of some of their particular predictions.

In the sense in which Christ and the apostles understood these prophecies and their fulfilment, they were all fulfilled. In the sense in which it has sometimes been made a test of orthodoxy to understand the prophecies and their fulfilment, it is not true that they all were, or all ever will be, fulfilled. For example, the New Testament clearly teaches* that the Christian Church has taken the place of the Jews to receive in different form the substance of the salvation they ex-

*D. S. S., i., p. 442.

pected for themselves. That is to say, the prophets were mistaken as to the exact manner in which the Messianic salvation was to be realized. The prophecy of it, the substance of the divine hope and prediction, is fulfilled in the experience of the Christian Church. For the Church is the true Israel, the seed of Abraham, the recipient of the prophecies, and the heir of the promises. But fulfilment in this sense and way involves the failure of fulfilment in the literal sense and expected way.

If what is said above is true of the body of Messianic prophecies, it need not affect our confidence in the inspiration of the prophets or the value of the testimony to Christ which they offer, to find unfulfilled or mistaken predictions relating to the fate of Israel and the surrounding nations in their future political relations. For example, it must be admitted that Tyre was not, according to the prophecy of Isaiah (see xxiii. 1, 15 f., and compare Ezekiel xxvi. 1 to xxviii. 10), subjected to the Assyrians so as, after lying waste for a long time, to resume its ancient commercial importance. Babylon did not fall into destruction before the attack of Cyrus as the same prophet predicted. The Egyptians were not led away into exile to Babylon as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel all threatened.

It might seem at first sight to some readers of the Bible as though this view of the nature of prophecy and its fulfilment would diminish or destroy the reasons for our confidence in the inspiration of the prophetic Scriptures, and in the cogency of their witness for Christ. On the contrary, however, this view greatly

expands and fortifies these reasons. Let it be supposed that the claim of prophetic Scripture to bear inspired testimony to the truth of the Gospel consisted chiefly in the exactness and minuteness of the details with which the prophets had succeeded in drawing a picture of the Messianic future. Such a minute correspondence of prediction and result would indeed be regarded as a remarkable and even an inexplicable thing. But a diligent search into the history of the past would doubtless show in soothsaying, clairvoyance, fortune-telling, and shrewd business or political calculation, many similar phenomena. Separated from its great moral ideals, the mere prediction of Hebrew prophecy would have to be regarded simply as allied to these phenomena. Each inquirer would then explain them from his own point of view. The spiritualist would regard them in one way; the believer in occult psychic forces —mind-reading, etc.—in another way; the devotee of historical and political studies, in yet another. Men might then be excited to wonder; but would not be brought to accept the truths of the kingdom of God.

Moreover, if Jesus were to fulfil Hebrew prophecy in the most literal way, His figure and mission would have to be so contracted as to fit closely in to the literal and temporal elements of this prophecy. If He were and did precisely what the prophets conceived of Messiah as being and doing, He would lose His ideal vastness, His world-historical significance, His inexhaustible and immeasurable character. Furthermore, it is impossible to see how each successive form of the Messianic idea could be literally correct, and yet how the idea could

develop in history under progressive divine guidance into the fair and large proportions which it finally attained. Great growths involve the imperfection of their earlier stages.

But, on the other hand, when we consider the Hebrew prophecy as the result of a great national spiritual impulse, that grew toward those wonderful ideals which the central personality of all the world's history fulfilled in their higher import, how absolutely unique in character, how divine in origin, does this prophecy appear! The general facts upon which our conception of the prophetic Scriptures should be based are sufficiently indisputable. A certain people, in its remote antiquity, became possessed of the thought that its future was to fulfil a strange destiny among the other peoples of the earth. This people regarded itself as under a covenant with the only living and true God; they were to be His people, and He was to be their God. All their history, its dark and bright places, its experiences and prospects, they interpreted as connected with the divine dealings with the nation. Among them arose and lived and worked, one after the other, through several centuries, a succession of men called "prophets." It was not the forecasting of the future, as a matter of soothsaying or fortune-telling, which formed the chief concern of these prophets; it was to remind the people of their covenant obligations to Jehovah, to threaten them with penalties for disobedience, and to comfort them with promises in case they would penitently return to Him. They had kings, but no one of them all was a perfect vicegerent of the Lord;

on the contrary, most of them led the nation farther away from the true path. They had priests, but these ministers of Jehovah were scarcely more adequate to help on the day of salvation, or to keep the people in the right way, than were their kings. Gradually, through weary centuries of sin and suffering, the great conceptions of a Messianic king and priest, and of a Messianic kingdom which should realize the ideal condition of a nation faithful to God, formed themselves in the minds of the prophets. They taught these conceptions to the people; they handed them down to their successors in the sacred prophetic office.

But the Messianic salvation did not come in the form in which its devoted servants expected that it would. The nation returned indeed from exile, and thus the prediction of some of the prophets was fulfilled. But the reigns that followed this return did not correspond to the picture of the Messianic reign; the age was not like the expected Messianic age. The ancient fire had burned out in the order of the prophets. God had ceased to send to the people by the mouths of holy men like those of olden time. But, finally, a babe was born in Bethlehem, and the child grew in favor with God and man. He was soon followed by many in the belief that He was a new and greater prophet. He was accepted and worshipped by His followers as the true Messianic king. His death as a malefactor on the cross did not finally quench this faith and devotion. On the contrary, His death was followed by the proclamation that He was risen from the dead and seated at the right hand of the divine majesty; thus He became the fulfiller of

all the prophecies in their true ideal import, the One of whom the holy men of old had spoken, though they had but dimly foreseen the outlines of His form.

And now what account shall be given of the foregoing facts? How shall we regard the prophetic utterances of the Hebrew seers, as well as the person and work of Him who claimed to fulfil them? To attempt to account for such facts without recognizing the divine agency in them would be equivalent to the attempt to banish God from all history. Nor can such utterances be reasonably ascribed to any other source than the Divine Spirit, who entered the souls of these ancient seers as a spirit of moral and religious insight, and also as a spirit of foresight of the consequences of moral and religious action under the divine plan of salvation.

But, chiefly, must the Christian believer remember that the Lord Jesus came into the midst of this organism of ideas, as it were, and by His life, doctrine, death, and resurrection, gave to them a fresh and enlarged significance. He is the central figure in the world's history; He is the central figure of biblical prophecy as well. That the sacred race of Hebrew prophets builded, with respect to their conceptions of Messiah and the Messianic kingdom, so much better than they knew, contributes not to the disparagement but rather to the demonstration of their divine insight and foresight. Next to the words of Christ and the apostles, in their claims to inspiration, stand the words of the ancient seers of Israel. Next to Christ and the apostles do we owe most to them for what they spoke

and wrote of the conditions, warnings, promises, expectations, and conduct, that concern the divine salvation of man. Their right to this position among the ranks of the greatest inspired teachers of humanity is not in the slightest degree impaired by the facts that, since they foretold the consequences of moral conduct and the issues of life and death as dependent upon men's relations to Jehovah, their prediction was conditional; that they relied upon an inheritance of moral and religious conceptions derived from their predecessors in prophecy, and only slowly and somewhat irregularly made original contributions to these conceptions; and that, not infrequently, they did not accurately apprehend and predict the form, time, or accompanying circumstances of the events in which those grand ideals were to find their historical realization.

We have already frequently referred to the fact that the New-Testament writers emphasize the appearance of Messianic truth in the prophetic Old-Testament Scriptures. It is to the discovery and recognition of such truth that they address themselves when making an appeal to the Old-Testament prophecies. In doing this they not infrequently overlook, and sometimes even mistake, the exact historical and grammatical interpretation of the authors. The Evangelist Matthew * is especially fond of noting the fulfilment of ancient predictions by the separate acts and occurrences in the life of Jesus. In doing this he is by no means careful always to guard against linguistic error, after the fashion

* D. S. S., i., p. 445 f.

required of a modern student of the prophecies. For example, he interprets Isaiah's language concerning the divine rescue of the nation by one born of woman with a stricter meaning for the word "virgin" than Isaiah intended. In another place (Matt. ii. 15) the words which Hosea (xi. 1) puts into the mouth of Jehovah with reference to an historical fact in the experience of the entire nation—"When Israel was a child, then I loved Him, and called my son out of Egypt"—are interpreted as a prediction of the return of the holy family from their sojourn in the south.

It must be admitted that such interpretations as the foregoing overlook the plain grammatical meaning of the prophet's words. At the same time they are to be taken as instances of the far-reaching principle, that all biblical history and prophecy has a wonderful organic unity; thus a fact in the experience of Israel may be considered as foreshadowing one in the life of Jesus Christ. Under the same principle there occur a few instances of more serious misunderstanding of the historical meaning of the words of an ancient prophetic author. One such instance is where Matthew (xxvii. 9 f.) finds a minute correspondence between prophecy and the incidents of our Lord's life, in that the price of His betrayal was given "for the *potter's* field"; whereas the very words "unto the potter" (see Zechariah xi. 13) originated in a corruption of the Hebrew text and should be translated, as the margin of the revised version does, "into the treasury." But in all such cases it must be remembered that the writers of the New Testament were compelled to use the text of

the Old Testament with which they were familiar. This text was, for the most part, the inaccurate and, in many places, corrupt Greek translation of the Hebrew. It should also be remembered that they, as a rule, cite from memory; they show little or no painstaking to bring before their readers the exact words of either the Hebrew text or its inaccurate Greek translation. Thus Luke, when referring to a passage from Isaiah as read by our Lord from a manuscript roll, instead of citing the passage as it must have been found in the Hebrew text, not only gives the Greek translation freely and from memory, but even introduces by a slip of memory a clause that really belongs to another prophet, and not to Isaiah at all.

Now, if the inspiration of the prophets is made to include the accurate foretelling of the particular events in the life of our Lord, with a clear knowledge of the nature of these events, and the inspiration of the Evangelists is made to include an infallible knowledge of the correct Hebrew text and of the historical meaning of the details of the prophetic language, then there appears to be no way of escape from our difficulties. But the biblical doctrine of inspiration requires us to make no such claim for the biblical writers. Indeed, such a claim is only an objectionable and mistaken feature of a particular theory of inspiration which is fast losing its hold on all minds, and which has already been pronounced deficient and harmful by expert students of the Bible. The rejection of this theory, however, in no respect impairs our confidence in the divine origin, and value as testimony, of the

prophecies of the Old Testament. For, as we have already seen, this confidence rests on other and far higher and broader grounds than such a theory.

The prophecy of the New-Testament Scriptures is essentially like that of the Hebrew Scriptures. Comparatively little of the New Testament, however, is given to prophecy. History, and the unfolding and practical application to the present Christian life of the doctrines of the Gospel, form the subjects of most of its books. But in certain parables of our Lord, in His eschatological discourses, and in the Book of Revelation, predictive elements are to be found. These are to be understood after the analogy of biblical prophecy in general. So far as Christ's utterances are concerned, however, we note this important difference: there is in them no proof that He, like the ancient Hebrew prophets, had any mistaken expectations as to the form in which, and times at which, the different stages of the development of His kingdom in the future were to arise. His parables, when they speak of the coming fate of this kingdom, are couched in language of that grand and yet indefinite type which best stimulates hope and fidelity, without any attempt at imparting the definite knowledge of things to come. *This* has wisely been concealed from the Church. And if a careful interpretation of His discourses on the last things shows that erroneous impressions as to the time to which His predictions referred found entrance into the record, we hold that this is due to His being misunderstood, and not to His being mistaken. Christ is the infallible teacher of the truths of His own kingdom

But He expressly told His disciples that He did not know the exact times when God would accomplish all these last results of His own coming.

We see, then, that Hebrew prophecy was correctly understood by the writers of the New Testament to have its essential truth, and its true fulfilment, in the relation in which it stood to Christ and to Christianity. Thus regarded, it anticipates, prepares the way for, and typically predicts, the Gospel as set forth in the deeds and teachings of Jesus, and in the structure and development of the Church. This view of Hebrew prophecy is true to the facts of history and to the ideas of revelation. It springs from the consciousness of our Lord, who understood the prophets in this manner; and who understood His own mission to be the fulfilment of prophecy.

We must remember, however, the large and loose meaning which, in imitation of the authority of Christ and the apostles, the early Christian teachers were able to give to the word "fulfilled." When we read that any ancient prediction was "fulfilled" in the life of Jesus, we may always fitly inquire, In what sense are we to understand these words? The further question, whether any particular prophecy *was* indeed thus fulfilled, will depend upon the answer which we give to the previous question. It would credit the apostles with less than ordinary intelligence to suppose that they invariably claimed a literal and historical fulfilment of the predictions of the Hebrew writers. On the day of Pentecost, for example, Peter stands up to affirm that Joel's prophecy concerning the outpouring

of the Spirit on the "great and notable day" of Jehovah had come to pass; this was not because the physical wonders of darkened sky and blood-red moon had then actually appeared as Joel presaged them, but because the promised effusion of the divine spiritual blessing had fallen on all classes of humankind.

The Christian student of the Bible loses nothing from the reasonable grounds for his faith by strict fidelity to the historical interpretation. What the prophets really meant is only to be learned by a study of their words as spoken in the historical setting necessary to explain them. How the New-Testament writers understood the prophets is to be learned only by the same kind of study. But it is also one important—yes, chief—result of such study, to recognize that the Hebrew prophet regarded himself as an organ of God for bringing to his nation the prospective results of the divine dealings with them, in justice and grace. It was the work of these inspired men to give to Israel, and to the world, those great conceptions which make up the biblical doctrine of divine self-revelation in redemption, and of a coming kingdom of redeemed souls. And it is no less a result of historical study to show that Christ and the apostles understood all these conceptions to be realized in Him and in His Church; and that, as a matter of fact, they were then, and have since been, most fully realized. As long as historical study and Christian faith unite in confirming these great truths, it is a matter of comparatively little importance if, in certain instances, we have to recognize mistaken predictions on the part of the ancient prophets, or erroneous in-

terpretations of such predictions on the part of New-Testament writers. We have this treasure also in earthen vessels.

But, finally, there is no more comprehensive and conclusive proof of the inspiration of large portions of sacred Scripture than the proof from prophecy as thus understood. We affirm again, that this proof is far more convincing than any which could be derived from remarkable minute correspondences between old-time prognostications and new-time events. And surely, the evidence for the Bible and Christianity would not be strengthened if, instead of the far grander ideal which was actually furnished, the exact form of Messianic salvation as predicted had been ushered in. No stronger bond unites the old dispensation and the new than this bond of prophecy; Hebrew prophecy looks forward to its fulfilment in Christianity; the events of Christianity look backward to the ideas and hopes which had their birth in Hebrew prophecy. Who can doubt that one divine and organizing Spirit runs through all? If any men who spoke in old time spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, surely the prophets are among that sacred number.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF THE BIBLE.

The preceding chapters have been occupied in considering the scientific, historical, and prophetical contents of the Old and New Testaments. On beginning the consideration of their moral and religious teaching it is plain that the discussion cannot be wholly separated from the results arrived at in these chapters. The moral and religious truth of biblical religion is, of course, the very gist and core of all its truth. For this reason we can never contemplate the origin and development of this religion from a purely historical and critical point of view. But, on the other hand, the moral and religious contents of the Bible cannot be separated and drawn off, as it were, from the other classes of its contents. We must not think to reach the essential truth of our religion, as it is scripturally fixed in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, by a superficial analysis. It is possible to divide the truths taught by these books into scientific, historical, miraculous, moral and religious, etc., in such a way as to rend truth from truth, instead of bringing all the forms of the one truth into their natural and divinely-ordered connections. The histories of the Bible are themselves freighted with moral and religious lessons; and many of its choicest doctrines are given to us as embodied in historical form.

At the same time—it may confidently be affirmed again—our consideration of the moral and religious truth of biblical religion cannot be a purely critical and historical affair. We require another instrument than historical criticism to tell us what is right in morals, and what appeals to and satisfies our deepest, most permanent, religious needs. We may speak of this required instrument as the "moral and religious consciousness." The nature of its witness to the Bible, and the relation in which the witness stands to the extent and authority of biblical truth, will be considered in another place. It is enough now simply to say that the moral and religious truth of the Scriptures, of necessity, appeals to the moral and religious nature of man. If it did not do this, it would be of no service to man, morally and religiously; nor could it get any support from human nature, or point of entrance into it, on the moral and religious side.

But the "consciousness" so-called, to which these higher truths of biblical morality and religion make their appeal, is not to be regarded as the untrained, natural judgment and feeling of men upon such matters. It would be interesting, indeed, to know how any one of the great Greek or Roman moralists—like Plato, Democritus, or Seneca—would have regarded the moral and religious teachings of the Old and New Testaments. Doubtless they would have condemned much of the teaching of the Old Testament, and would heartily have approved most of the ethical principles of the New. We should recognize in this hearty approval a certain real argument in favor of the Christian Scrip-

tures; for it would tend to show how completely they meet and satisfy the moral nature of man. But we should not regard the disapproval, by these moralists, of certain moral or religious tenets as at all final or conclusive; because we should remember that certain tenets of the Bible make their chief appeal to a form or type of consciousness that has been shaped and enlightened by the truth of the Bible itself.

Two sets of considerations must, therefore, be constantly taken into account. An historical and critical study of the Bible is necessary to the most intelligent judgment regarding the real nature and authority of its teachings upon moral and religious truths. Many things are said and done in sacred Scripture, the moral and religious bearing of which we cannot understand at all without an accurate knowledge of the circumstances and characters of the ancient writers. Historical study also enables us to see the real nature of the biblical revelation;—how progressive it was, and how its earlier, and, in themselves, imperfect forms were necessary in the course of the divine discipline of humanity.

On the other hand, we must, at all hazards, be faithful to our central Christian principles in respect to what is true to think and right to do. Christ and the apostles themselves recognized the imperfect and faulty character of certain elements of the Old-Testament religion and morality. But they also taught the world how to distinguish between the perfect and the imperfect, between the true and the false. In judging the tenets of Scripture itself by the light of our instructed and illuminated Christian consciousness, we

are only following them. That Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture itself is in some sort a principle of the Reformation theology. It is the most important part of this principle that all Scripture is to be judged, and absolutely approved or relatively condemned, in the clear light of those great moral and religious truths and facts in which the essence of Christianity consists. To be disloyal to that Christian judgment and conscience, for the gift of which we are obligated to the Holy Spirit, and the training of which is received through the most precious uses of the Bible, is far more dangerous to Christian faith than to recognize the relatively low morality or mistaken opinion of some ancient Hebrew general, author, or king.

The moral and religious teaching of the Bible must, therefore, be regarded both from the historical point of view and from the point of view taken by enlightened Christian judgment and feeling. Its discussion requires information derived from historical and critical studies; but it also requires deference to that moral and religious nature which has been awakened, informed, and elevated by the very Christian truth which the Bible brings to us.

First of all, it should be made clear how the moral and religious truth of the Bible stands related to its different classes of contents. It is certainly to this truth, and to this truth only, that the claims made by its different writers *primarily* apply. It is to the moral and religious teachings of the Law and the Prophets, as looking forward to Himself and as fulfilled by Himself, that our Lord appeals in all His mention of the Hebrew

Scriptures. The apostles follow His example in this regard. Nor do we find that the claims which Mosaism and Prophetism make for themselves, when considered in their true intention, extend further than the claims which Christ and the disciples make for them. The promises of Christ to His disciples did not guarantee the help of the Spirit with respect to any other form of truth than this—and, indeed, with respect to this form of truth only in a limited way. And plainly it is our interest in the fate of this form of truth, as it is supposed to be more or less involved in various ways with historical and critical inquiries, which sharpens and heightens all our interest in the answers to such inquiries.

It would seem desirable, then, to separate the moral and religious truth of the Bible from the answers to be given to all historical and critical inquiries. But it has already been said that the very nature of this truth, and the form of its delivery to us in sacred Scripture, are such as to render impossible a complete separation of this kind. For example, the truth which the writer of the Mosaic cosmogony wishes to inculcate is moral and religious truth. It concerns the divine power, wisdom, and goodness; and, more especially, the divine commandment of the Sabbatic law, and the religious foundation of the nation upon the covenant so closely connected with that law. But the form which the teaching of this moral and religious truth here takes is that of a *narrative of creation;* and this narrative cannot be cleared of all the faulty and mistaken notions upon matters of physical science which prevailed at that time.

In the same way must we conceive of the relation which exists between the histories of the Bible and its moral and religious teaching. We cannot make a distinction by drawing a line which shall completely separate the two. Much of the Bible's most profound and essential moral and religious truth is given in the form of history; its history is, as a rule, worthy of being considered concrete doctrine. All this is especially true of that central personality of Christ, whose birth, death, and life, whose acts and treatment at the hands of men, whose appearance and setting in human history, are all of the widest and deepest significance. So, then, the question, whether we have a substantially true picture of this personality, becomes one of supreme ethical and religious importance. It cannot be considered *merely* as an historical question.

But, on the other hand, we find that the sacred history is not always infallible; is not free from all mistakes of fact, and date, and number; nor always composed upon a basis of authentic information as to what actually occurred. No claim to this effect can be found in the Bible itself from Genesis to Revelation; and no claim from which this claim can be derived as a legitimate consequence.

The fact that no hard and fixed line can be drawn between the historical and the moral and religious contents of the biblical books, and the fact that these books are not free from errors of an historical kind, when taken together, are not in the least prejudicial to the inspiration or authority of the Bible. For a critical and historical examination confirms what the needs of

a reasonable and truly biblical faith suggest—namely, that all the historical errors of the biblical books do not affect the genuine nature or extent of its moral and religious teaching. We know whom we are trusting when we trust Christ, and what He said and did so far as concerns the doctrine of Christian salvation and the principles and rules of Christian conduct. We know this precisely as well and as certainly as we should if the Gospels were historically infallible, to the minutest detail. The discovery of its method of writing history, and the criticism of its histories, may largely alter our conception of the method in which God revealed to man the moral and religious truth which the Old Testament contains. But, after this alteration has taken place, all the moral and religious truth, which was ever conveyed by these writings, is conveyed by them still.

Furthermore, within the moral and religious teachings of the Bible, we learn to distinguish certain degrees of value and of perfection. The revelation which God made of Himself as the Redeemer of man was a progressive one. Not all at once, nor with its most advanced and choicest truths thrust upon the world before the world had been in some sort prepared for them, did this revelation appear in history. It was itself an historical affair. It began with a discipline of the people of Israel, who were taken hold of when upon a low plane, and were treated, as they could bear it, to new and higher forms of moral conceptions and of rules for moral conduct. But the Bible is its own corrector in this regard. Our authoritative instruction

concerning the right estimate of the moral and religious views of the Old Testament comes from Christ and the apostles. They teach that these views have their highest significance and proof in their correspondence to the spirit of the Gospel. Thus there is in the Bible what the men of old time taught to those of their generation, and there is what Jesus says to us. The clear and full light of ethical and religious truth shines only in the latter; the former has its dark, defective, and temporary side, as well as its side of pure and permanent heavenly radiance.

There is no reason, then, why a Christian student of the Bible should hesitate to look calmly upon the imperfect and passing elements of the Old-Testament ethics and religion; or why he should shrink from making the distinctions necessary to separate these elements from the perfect and eternal Christian truth. Christ has showed him how to make these distinctions. In making them he is not setting up his judgment against that of the holy men of old who spake of God and His kingdom as the Spirit moved them; he is only using the very truth which the infallible teacher Himself revealed in order to appreciate its vast superiority to that taught by the teachers who lived in the inferior and preparatory stages.

Thus regarded, we find various passages, and even some entire books, of the Old Testament, whose moral and religious tone is greatly inferior to that of its other passages and books—not to say, inferior to the moral and religious tone of Christianity. We may fitly apologize for these portions of sacred Scripture by

considering the circumstances in which they were written. We must always penetrate to the real heart of their teaching and try to judge its nature, instead of being repelled by an exterior that appears rough and hard because its texture is so foreign to the modes of our own time. We must seek for essential morality, and not scruple overmuch at rude customs and manners. But *we positively must not commend*, through desire to apologize for all the moral and religious views of the Old Testament, anything that is essentially immoral or of low morality as judged by the Christian standard.

Concerning the Book of Esther,* for example, the judgment of a Christian scholar is pretty plainly warranted: "No other writing of the Old Testament is so remote from the spirit of the gospel." It may be pleaded in its favor that the fast by which Esther prepared herself for her heroic deed, and the question put to her by Mordecai—"Who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" imply some recognition of divine providence. But this recognition is very uncertain and indirect. Contrary to the whole tendency of all other sacred Hebrew writing, no mention of the divine name is made in the Book of Esther; nor does the aim of it appear to be to exalt this name so much as to commend a wholly extra-biblical feast, called the feast of Purim. It is not strange, then—considering also its late origin—that this book was so reluctantly received into the canon of the Old Testament, and obtained no recognition or endorsement whatever from the early Christian writings

*D. S. S., i., p. 464 f.

Moreover, no other biblical book shows the same narrow Jewish spirit of revenge and persecution. The Christian reader is not, indeed, warranted in going so far as Luther went, who heartily wished that it were out of existence. But he certainly is bound by fidelity to the Christian spirit to recognize the relatively low moral and religious tone of this writing.

The Books of Ruth and Jonah* are of a decidedly higher order than Esther, when viewed from the stand-point of Christian moral and religious truth. The former has not, indeed, the same positive moral and religious character which most of the Hebrew Scriptures possess; but it is without blemishes, and is a beautiful and important story. The Book of Jonah, although it was never designed (so we believe) to be considered as throughout an historical composition, conveys, upon a certain historical basis, in the form of allegory, a most valuable truth. Indeed, this book is in certain regards one of the noblest and most truly inspired of all the Old-Testament writings; for it gives a lofty revelation of the divine love and forgiveness toward all suffering and sinful nations, at a time when there was much darkness and obscurity of vision on this point even among the more advanced followers of Jehovah. And —as has already been repeatedly said—the great purpose of the Bible is to make God known and felt as the Redeemer of mankind.

The very nature of the Book of "Proverbs" is such that it cannot easily be considered as a whole from the moral and religious point of view. It is a collection of

* D S. S., i., p. 465.

wise sayings upon a great variety of subjects. Some of the Hebrew proverbs gathered into the canonical book of that name show the impress of the great moral and religious ideas which God revealed to the pious of the nation. They are pervaded with intense ethical sentiment; they rebuke sin, exalt righteousness, exhort to mercy, warn against gluttony, drunkenness, and lust. Others are true enough but commonplace, and fall below the average of Oriental proverbs. Still others approach very near the limit of a shrewdness that encourages wrong-doing; and so are quite unfit for a Christian to govern his conduct by.

In general we may remind ourselves that these wise-sayings were not considered by the Jews themselves to have the highest kind of inspiration, and were never designed to show those who have the rule of Christ, how to conduct themselves. For example, to be reminded that "a gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth, it prosperoth" (see xvii. 8), suggests the wide-spreading influence of bribery in Oriental lands, but arouses the Christian conscience against dwelling too much on the "profitableness" of the proverb rather than in favor of adopting it as a rule of conduct. The same thing is true of the twin proverb: "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men"; or, "A gift in secret pacifieth anger, and a present in the bosom strong wrath."

The Song of Solomon (as we shall see in another connection) found difficulty in gaining admittance to the Hebrew canon; it was carried by the allegorical

interpretation into the place which it held among the Christian sacred Scriptures. This interpretation understood its narrative of worldly love to be symbolic of the relations of the divine and the human heart. Since the decline of the allegorical interpretation, to which in general the principles of the Protestant reformation were opposed, this poem has been left in a unique position. Judged by the moral standard, with a fair allowance for the modes of behavior and language prevalent in the East at that time, its substance and form of expression are admirable in the portrayal of pure, tender, and faithful affection between the sexes. Only in one or two passages do the limits of moral purity seem to a refined Christian sentiment to be transgressed. From its very nature, however, when viewed in the clear light of a discreet and sober science of biblical exegesis, it can never appear as the result of revelation, or of inspiration in the higher sense of this term.

A different class of cases calls for a somewhat different conclusion. There are many portions of the biblical writings which ostensibly give a record or picture of moral and religious experiences—some important and some relatively unimportant, some morally unjustifiable and some righteous—through which various saints and sinners of old time are said to have passed. In such cases we have no right to require of the writer of the record, the draughtsman of the picture, anything more than fidelity to truth, with sympathy, anger, pity, and other moral emotions, moving in its behalf. The saints, both of ancient and of modern times, do often doubt God's word, waver in their confidence in

His justice and mercy, and wander in dark places of rebellion and despair. The story or picture of these experiences belongs to the true history of the soul, to the true history of the kingdom of redeemed souls as well. And when the result of the story, or of the picture, is a warning to others to make them wise, or a call to praise the Lord for His goodness in finally leading such persons out into the confidence of trust and the full light of moral vision, then the terms of revelation and inspiration in their highest sense may apply to this artistic work.

Understood in this way, and considered from the advanced point of view where the Gospel of Christ places us, Job, Ecclesiastes, and many of the Psalms and of the prophetical and historical passages of the Old Testament, appear amply justified in claiming a place in sacred Scripture. The same standards of judgment also apply to much of what is told in the Bible concerning the sayings and doings of both good and bad men. Only in these cases an allowance must be made for the great changes which have taken place (and this largely as a direct result of Christian influences) in moral sentiments and ideas, not of a fundamental and unchangeable kind. There are many things in the Hebrew Bible which may have served at one time the purpose of moral quickening and purifying, that are now by a sort of Christian instinct passed hastily and cautiously by; or even, on all ordinary occasions, entirely neglected.

Still different and much more difficult are the comparatively few cases in which deeds, that the unprejudiced and pure Christian judgment and sentiment

would unhesitatingly pronounce wrong, are narrated with the manifest approval of the writer; or where wishes, that such judgment and sentiment would deem immoral, appear to spring from the heart of the writer and impress themselves upon the sacred page. In all *such* cases, certain general considerations, like the following, should be taken into account. The ancient Jews, like all the peoples of that day (and, in fact, like all peoples of every time), were much disposed to deceit, to cruelty, and to lust. Their condition, with respect to internal civilization and surroundings, was such that these kinds of wickedness tended to assume a gross and outbreaking expression.

Moreover, the prevalent views and sentiments on matters of conduct were, judged by the pure Christian standard, and even by that debased standard of Christian ethics which still customarily prevails, exceedingly low. The Jewish people were, as their own writers assure us and as Christ plainly accuses them of being, coarse and unyielding material in the divine hand. But God undertook their moral and religious discipline. In undertaking it, He received them just as they were—deceitful, cruel, lustful. This discipline was conducted in an historical fashion; it was accomplished by successive stages in the disclosure of divine truth and the imparting of divine life. It was while they were under this discipline that they were both actors in the sacred history which the Bible records, and also authors of its sacred writings. All this shows the wonderful condescension of God in carrying out His plan for making Himself known as the Redeemer of man.

This progressive divine discipline, with its successive stages of revelation and inspiration, was, of course, largely carried on by human agents. Of these agents certain choice and effective ones were selected to do a special work for the whole people. In the deeds of the sacred history some stand forth prominent as the chosen and inspired ministers of Jehovah—kings, generals, magistrates, etc. In its moral and religious training under the disclosure and enforcement of truth, the prophets, psalmists, and moralists of the nation are prominent. These men are the authors of the Hebrew sacred Scriptures. They stand for the best moral and religious consciousness of the time; but their ideas and feelings on moral and religious subjects were not by any means necessarily true and faultless, when judged by the Christian standard. Christ and the apostles plainly teach that they were not. It does not follow that, because such views and sentiments find their expression in the Hebrew sacred writings, they are morally right, as tested by the highest moral truth. On the other hand, it does not follow because certain views and sentiments are not perfectly right, that therefore the writings in which they are expressed have no claim to be considered inspired, or to have a place in sacred Scripture.

We find on examination, however, that the force of such considerations as the foregoing bears most heavily upon those portions of the Hebrew Bible which are, in general, lowest down in the moral scale as judged by the standard of Old-Testament religion itself. This statement may be amply illustrated by the

case of Jael's deed,* the narrative of which occurs in Judges iv. 17–22. The deed was a deed of base cruelty and treachery, even when measured by the low standards of morality that belong to the world's dark places and ancient times. All the efforts made to excuse it when regarded from the point of view furnished by enlightened principles of ethics and Christian sentiments of morality, are quite unavailing. They are unavailing because, in order to justify the deed at all, it is necessary to assume the general principle that no kind of private deceit and treachery is wrong in case it is practiced against the enemy of one's people. But this principle is inferior even to that adopted by the Talmudic, or uninspired Jewish writings, and is contrary to the best moral teaching and spirit of the Old Testament. Yet, in the beautiful patriotic song ascribed to Deborah and Barak, which follows the narrative of Jael's deed, the fullest sympathy with this deed is frankly expressed. What, then, shall we say of the morality of the sentiment thus incorporated, as it were, into the sacred writings?

We cannot justify the deed of Jael by assuming that it accorded with an express divine command; for there is not the slightest hint in the narrative of such a command, and, if there were, this—it has been well said—"would only increase our difficulty." Neither do we treat our moral nature fairly when we try to approve the lie of Jael by speaking of it as "corporate and sympathetic." Indeed, all such ways of apologizing for the conduct of this rude, ancient heroine only result

* D. S. S., i., p. 468 f.

in doing harm to our most precious possessions—to sensitive Christian judgment and feeling on matters of morals and religion. But no harm whatever is done by saying at once and frankly: The song of Deborah and Barak, although found within the Hebrew Bible, must be taken for what it is morally worth. The deed of Jael was a base deed. No commendation of its baseness is justifiable. It is rebuked not only by all the teachings of the New Testament, but also by the higher teachings of the Old. Both it and the commendation of it are to be judged in the light of the times when it occurred. Such cases of moral defectiveness appear in the judgment of the best and most pious of Israel. They show the inferiority of the old dispensation to the new. They do not by any means overwhelm or drag down the divinity of the process of divine self-revelation in which they occur; they rather constitute instances which show us the necessary stages and steps of that process.

Similar considerations must control our views of the exterminating wars of Israel, and of the spirit in which those wars are conceived by the Old-Testament writers. Stern and terrible war may come about of necessity in accordance with the divine plan of discipline and salvation; a divine command to undertake such war does not necessarily contravene the absolute principles of right. On the other hand, the conceptions, the modes, the limits, which even the pious Israelites ascribed to such commands, might belong to an imperfect and low stage of moral culture. Of course, whatever hatred and cruelty of spirit entered into them is unjustifiable,

whether as measured by the higher biblical standard or by the standard of the enlightened conscience. In the history of Israel we behold much of what has finely been called "the undisciplined passion of justice working without the perception of the limit which man's individuality imposed upon it." For it accords with the ideas and habits of these ancient times to consider men in "masses," as it were. The tribe, the family, the people, was regarded as having a kind of corporate responsibility; even the animals and the products of the soil seemed to share in the taint and need of purifying which the wickedness of the adult human beings incurred. Thus, to *exterminate*, to destroy root and branch utterly, seemed the only way to clear away the accumulated moral corruption.

Then, too, it must be remembered that Israel regarded itself as especially beloved of Jehovah, as under a particular covenant with Him, as destined through its connection with Him to experience immeasurable blessing and to bring such blessing to the world. Nor can it be doubted that this view, in however distorted and coldly hard form it may sometimes have been held even by pious Jews, was substantially a true view. That it was true is proved by what Israel has done for the world. Those other peoples or individuals, therefore, who seemed to the men of greatest insight and foresight regarding the destiny and significance of the nation, to stand athwart the path of Jehovah's plans, seemed also justly to have incurred the charge of unrighteousness, and the punishment due to the unrighteous.

But, on the contrary, the Bible is very generous in its use of the word "righteous." They are pre-eminently called righteous whom its authors regard as standing and fighting on the right side in the world's great battle between those who love and serve the true God and those who do not. It is not necessary, however, to justify all the particular judgments and sentiments of the writers of the Old Testament, in order to appreciate the moral worthiness and helpfulness of their teaching, or to regard their work as sacred and inspired.

The moral estimate which the Old Testament puts upon its characters must always be considered from two points of view. One of these is the historical point of view; the other is that furnished by matured moral and Christian truth. Those pious souls, even when they were authors of sacred Scripture, did not themselves stand upon the plane to which they have helped to elevate us. It is not hard to comprehend why they regarded the low morality of a hero like Samson or Jephthah so differently in some respects from the judgment which we are compelled to pronounce from our higher and Christian point of view. The times were such as necessarily to induce a confusion of the idea of authorized administration of justice with the idea of unauthorized vengeance; such confusion lasted among the Jews until Christ's day.

The so-called "imprecatory" Psalms have often borne, as a heavy burden, upon the conscience of the Christian believer. But there is no real need why this should be so. These denunciations of their enemies by the writers of such Psalms are, as a rule, directed

against the enemies of the Lord and of true religion. Thus understood, they may form a measure of the passionate devotion which the person uttering them had toward the cause of divine justice and divine grace. But, after all, we can go only a little way in company with the spirit of many of the imprecatory Psalms; from this point onward our path and theirs lie on a different level and along different lines. Said the good Thomas Fuller: "When I come to such Psalms wherein David curseth his enemies, oh! then let me bring my soul down to a lower note, for these words were made only to fit David's mouth." And Chalmers said: "Let the spirit breathed forth by David in the Psalms actuate us, save when he indulges in the vindictive strain." In the rare instances where a really "vindictive" strain does characterize a passage of the Old Testament we are bound by every consideration of Christian morality not to *countenance* it, whatever considerations may be urged in partial excuse of the expression of such feeling.* It is a long and toilsome way in the history of the human race to the dying prayer of Jesus from such prayers against one's enemies as that "strangers may make spoil of his labor," and no one exist "to have pity on his fatherless children"; that "the iniquity of his fathers may be remembered with the Lord," and the "sin of his mother not be blotted out." The Spirit of God in the biblical revelation has traversed the way. Our Lord expressly commands us, for example, to do the very opposite of what is done by

* See especially Ps. vii., xxxv., lxix., cix., and parts of lviii., cxxxvii., cxl., cxlix., and compare D. S. S., i., p. 471 f.

the author of the one-hundred-and-ninth Psalm. It is the Holy Spirit which forbids us to believe that a state of mind so deprecated by our Lord could accord with the principles of absolute morality.

We have already seen how the moral and religious teaching of the Mosaic law was regarded by Christ and the apostles. This law, they taught, contained a revelation of absolute moral and religious truth; but it also contained merely permissive and temporary enactments, as well as certain concrete institutions of low or imperfect morality. The law of retaliation and of blood-revenge are in place here.* Both these laws are exceedingly ancient and wide-spread among Semitic and Indo-European peoples. Homer, Hesiod, and the Greek tragic poets bear witness to customs and sentiments which are similar to those prevailing in the Israelitish community. The provisions of the Mosaic code were doubtless, on the whole, as humane as the time demanded or admitted. But they were not such as comport with the spirit or manners of a Christian civilization. Our Lord himself taught this when He contrasted His own teachings with what had been said by them of old time regarding "an eye for an eye," and "a tooth for a tooth." The injunction, "Thine eye shall not pity," even when taken in connection with a legal administration, partakes of a spirit inferior to that of the Gospel. So when our Lord speaks of the ancient law as being to "hate thine enemy," as well as love thy neighbor, He rebukes a spirit which

* D. S. S., i., p. 473 f.

undoubtedly here and there breaks through the sacred Hebrew history and legislation.

In legislating for the relations of the sexes the Mosaic law shows the same mixed character which has just been referred to in speaking of its enactments touching the relations of friendship and enmity between men. This fact our Lord distinctly teaches in His remarks upon the legal provisions for divorce. The position of woman in ancient Israel, as compared with other and surrounding nations in the same era, was on the whole an exalted one. Women are found among the civil magistrates and the religious teachers of the people. The sacred code makes certain express merciful provisions for the protection of woman's rights of person. Although concubinage and polygamy were legally recognized and permitted, the restrictive enactments were, on the whole, favorable toward the more defenceless party. Certain legal provisions, however,—for example, those for testing and punishing a wife suspected of infidelity toward her husband (see Num. v. 11–31)—show how low down in the moral scale and how superstitious this people were. The law necessarily partook of the characteristics of the people to a certain large extent. It could not well be too much above them if it was to raise them up.

In considering all such cases as the foregoing it must not be forgotten that there is another side to the law of Israel,—the side of the progressive divine revelation of public justice, mercy, and love. For the best contents of the Old Testament, and especially the moral and religious instructions and spirit of the New Testament,

are so far above the more defective sentiments and statutes that undue importance would seem to be attached to the latter by dwelling longer upon them. Indeed, the Christian student of the Bible always prefers to dwell upon the lower side of the Mosaic code in an apologetic way. But a candid scholarship leads one to see that the true apology does not consist in refusing to admit the existence of its moral imperfections and blemishes. To do this, even in the supposed interest of the Bible itself, involves one in a conflict with the real authority of the Holy Spirit on moral and religious matters. It may lead to a virtual denial of the teaching of our Lord and His apostles. The true spirit of Old-Testament revelation is not in the law of retaliation and of blood-revenge. It is rather in the mass of legislation, designed for uplifting the people. It is not only in the negative commands, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart," and "Thou shalt not take vengeance"; but also and chiefly in the positive injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (see Lev. xix. 18).

In order to understand the legal and historical morals of the Old Testament, the distinction between its different stages, eras, and portions is indispensable. The purer and higher moral and religious truths struggled upward into the consciousness of the chosen people. The divine revelation which made God known as the Redeemer of the nation and of all mankind came, indeed, through selected and inspired servants of God himself. But it came also in an historical way, by successive steps and in a process of history. The inspired agents and actors in this process were themselves,

of necessity, subjected to the conditions which governed the entire process. When the law had served to lead men to Christ, its own imperfections became exposed.

But the signal service and marked value of the law also appear more clearly when considered in the historical way. It may indeed be said that, unless the Old-Testament dispensation had been relatively imperfect, it could never have served effectively in actual and historical relations to the New-Testament dispensation. God did not fear to mingle His most exalted moral and religious truths with certain crude conceptions and mistaken practices of the people to whom He reached down in order to save them, and through them to save the world. The concrete enactments of the moral law of Israel were, indeed, not all in conformity with the divine ideas of mercy and justice as revealed in Christ; but they served on the whole as the material in which these ideas could embody themselves and so get an entrance into the actual history of mankind.

The remark just made leads us to notice one great practical excellence of much moral and religious teaching in the Bible—especially in the Old Testament. It emphasizes the concrete divine word. In the earlier stages of moral and religious training men are not ready to be taught by abstract and general principles; they cannot safely be left to guide themselves by applying these principles, for themselves, to their daily conduct. So the divine voice speaks to men with a definite command; it says, Thou shalt *not* do this, but Thou *shalt* do that. The particular forms which the enactments of this legal discipline took in Israel are of much less

importance than the general intention that by the enactments mankind shall be taught that there is a God to be obeyed.

But moral and religious teaching by concrete enactments is, of itself, a very restricted way; it is sure to fail of fitly developing the moral and religious life. Even the law of the Old Testament recognizes this truth. Especially in its more spiritual version in Deuteronomy, where less is made of what is priestly and ritualistic, many divine words of rebuke, expostulation, warning, entreaty, encouragement, and promise, are found. When the great prophets arose, they relied comparatively little upon the value and force of concrete enactments—particularly of a priestly and ritualistic sort. Indeed, this fact is so plain that it leads us to doubt how far they were aware even of the existence of these enactments. The prophets show little or no regard for the innumerable minute provisions of ritual and ecclesiastical life; they rather exalt a relatively few principles of veracity, justice, mercy, piety, and faith.

When the word of God came to men in the Gospel it brought the realization, on their ideal side, of all the words which "the Law and the Prophets" had preserved. They were all summed up in the one principle of love to God and one's neighbor, with the understanding that the Gentile, too, is the "neighbor" of the Jew, that there is indeed no more Jew and Gentile, but all are one in Christ. The entire body of concrete legal enactments, including the Decalogue itself, now ceases as such to have any authority; the moral and religious principles that entered into these enactments

are taken up into Christianity and so stand valid. But even these stand valid, not because they are of the law as it was ascribed to Moses; nor because they are parts of sacred Scripture; but because they are of the essence of Christianity itself.

The summary of those great moral and religious truths of sacred Scripture which are eternally valid, which constitute its body of revealed doctrine, and the teaching of which forms the chief claim of this Scripture to inspiration, would involve the description of Christianity itself. This description we cannot, of course, attempt. Yet a few considerations may be helpful here.

There is a wonderful unity in the moral and religious teaching of the Scriptures, if we turn our attention away from the faultiness of certain parts of the Old Testament, and catch the meaning of the whole as seen in the light of biblical history when crowned by the truths of the Gospel of Christ. One spirit runs the thread through all the texture. One great system of truths, concerning the manifestation of the divine love in the redemption of sinful, needy, and helpless humanity, everywhere appears. There is essentially the same truth under varying forms of expression, and with different degrees of energy and purity in manifestation.

Moreover, the *moral* and the *religious* teachings and truths of the Bible are never exhibited as divorced. They are presented as bound together because of the existence of one underlying principle: The foundation of biblical (and of Christian) morality is in a moral personality, and the centre and source of human virtue is allegiance to that personality.

That "love" which is the spring of all right conduct is directed first, toward a personal God, who loves man and holds communion with him in love; and second, toward one's fellow as, like one's self, the child of God. The revelation of the Bible is the fellowship of gracious and redeeming love. The personal self-communication of God is made in such form that He can command and teach the soul of man, and can evoke its personal affection; the soul can pass over the dark barriers which separate it, in its natural, unbelieving condition, from God, and can address God in terms of personal trust and love.

In the Old Testament, the choicest and foremost teachers hold essentially this ethical view of God. In the New Testament, the personality of Christ—God manifested and with us—becomes the source of ethical and religious life and conduct. God comes near to man, dwells with man, in an historical personality. He thus awakens the highest and most devoted affection, and stirs to their depths the springs of moral endeavor and action. Jesus is not, therefore, solely or chiefly an example for our imitation; He is also and rather a divine life entering as a motive into humanity. Faith attaching itself to Him thus becomes the source of Christian morals; the central element and essential characteristic of all ethical impulse becomes fidelity to His personality. Thus faith in Him is not an isolated virtue, or one among many virtues; it is the saving quality, the comprehensive and governing attitude of the soul. Fidelity to Him ensures the crown of life (see Rev. ii. 10).

It is in the light of this great central moral and re-

ligious truth that all the particular moral and religious teachings of the biblical books are to be considered and estimated. What an ethical power is Christian faith in the Pauline sense of the word! Paul had followed, conscientiously, the requirements of the national Old-Testament religion. He had conceived of the Mosaic law as expressing the divine will, as being indeed the law of God. His conscience pronounced him blameless as touching the zeal and fidelity with which he had kept this law. On becoming a Christian he made no marked advance in fidelity to conscience; nor did his estimate of the divinity of the law he had followed so zealously become enhanced, but rather changed from the rabbinical and traditional to the free, critical, and Christ-like point of view. He gained the knowledge and the experience of new relations to God brought about by his faith in Jesus. This the Mosaic code had been powerless to produce.

The many admirable and powerful qualities of the biblical ethics need not be stated in detail. This ethics reaches all around human nature on its many sides; it is free from that extreme asceticism which despises the good things of the present life, and yet it forbids and prevents the yielding of one's self-hood to the flesh and the world. Under the influence of the expectation of the immediate personal return of Jesus to establish a kingdom on the earth, the New-Testament church held certain views, and were impelled to certain courses of conduct, which were adventitious and temporary in the Christian life. These views may even at times seem open to the charge of a passing fanaticism. Neverthe-

less, the entire biblical view of life is eminently sober, sensible, and practical. The Hebrew writings commend the course of the man who is grateful and rejoices in length of years, in many children, and bountiful fruits of industry. The apostles, even under the impulse of the expectations referred to above, and under the temptations of a corrupt and persecuting age, do not forbid to marry; they exhort all men to remain faithfully in their calling, to earn their living by their labor, to be loyal to the state, and loving and dutiful in domestic life.

And who shall compute the immeasurable influences for good—for light, life, and salvation—which the greater truths of biblical revelation have brought to the world? Surely the carping critic, who cannot overlook any examples of inferior and imperfect opinion which may seem to occur in the earlier preparatory stages of this revelation, and thus fix his admiring gaze on its outcome in the gift of eternal truth and eternal life, as well as the trembling Christian who fears the loss of this gift, if he ventures only once to admit the occurrence of such examples, are alike unreasonable. Both are lacking in a true perspective. The spirit, as well as the judgment, of the former are foreign to that needed for the right appreciation and estimate of biblical religion; while the affection of the latter for this religion, not being mixed with wisdom, has warped his judgment.

The writings of the New Testament, however, are so completely like a pure stream bursting directly forth from one fountain that most of the foregoing consider-

ations do not apply to them. In them no wishes or prayers occur which have the appearance of personal bitterness and the spirit of cursing. In them are no divine commands to exterminate, root and branch, men and women and children and cattle, the enemies of Jehovah and His people. The benevolent side of Mosaism, and the tender, sympathetic side of Prophetism, which saw a great light arising on the whole human race through Israel's redemption, is here brought prominently forward; *it* rather than whatever superstitions may have been acknowledged in the legal code, or whatever imprecations may have been uttered in certain Psalms, is fulfilled in the prevalent morality and religion of the Bible.

Full acknowledgment of the claims of divine justice, and of organized and legally administered human justice, is made in the New Testament; but the laws of retaliation and of private blood-revenge, with all the views and practices which they perpetuated and encouraged, are rebuked and done away. Most awful denunciations of sin and threatenings of divine retribution are indeed found in the Christian Scriptures. And if they were not, the biblical truth would culminate in one-sided and unreal conceptions, and in unworthy and enervating sentiment. But these denunciations and threatenings, in their intensest form, come from the very One who rebuked that part of the ancient religion which fostered the love of the Jew alone, together with the spirit of indifference or hatred toward the Gentile; they come from the One who brings the divine love to all mankind. They are notably directed against those sins of

which, not the weak and lowly, but the leaders of business, fashion, and piety, are most conspicuously guilty —against pride, avarice, and soul-destroying hypocrisy.

There is a progress of doctrine in the Old Testament; but the difficulty of recognizing its precise factors and stages is increased by the fact that we do not know the date and manner of origin of its different books. There is also great, and even marvellous, progress of doctrine between the Old Testament and the New. This progress is so great that it is difficult to say how far it is proper to regard the New-Testament morals and religion as growing out of the morals and religion of the Old Testament. The fact of such progress is chiefly due to the pervasive and incalculably great influence of the personality of Jesus Christ. His moral and religious teaching was manifestly in some sort an outgrowth of that of the ancient Hebrew sacred writings. Yet how much more than this it was! He astonishes and offends the rabbinical expositors of these writings by the independent position which He assumes toward them. He criticizes the ancient Scriptures, and yet announces that He is come to fulfil them in every particular. He teaches, relying on His own authority and not as the scribes. Hence He imparts to His followers for all time the authority, the power, and the right, to estimate these same ancient Scriptures, and to pronounce upon them, from His own superior and eternally true point of view.

There is also a progress of doctrine in the New Testament. The truth of the Gospel, as given in its primitive and germinal form by Christ's own words

and acts, by His life, death, resurrection, and total personality, becomes subjected to the reflection of pious and inspired minds. The meaning of it all is only more or less gradually comprehended. It is apprehended in different aspects and on different sides by different minds. In some cases the form of the apprehension is colored by mistaken expectations connected with the date and manner of the Lord's renewed manifestation of His personal presence on the earth. But it is not colored so as to affect or change its essential nature. The Gospel although preached and practiced in connection with mistaken millenarian expectations is the Gospel still. And in the apostolic age these expectations did not so injuriously affect the doctrine and life of the Christian Church at large as they are likely to do under the greatly changed conditions of the present age.

In their own age we find the apostles evincing their inspiration by the warnings and rebukes they administer in view of this very expectation of the speedy personal return of Christ. They can be held responsible for no disorder, no forsaking of daily avocations, no idleness and misuse of this age's opportunities through anticipation of the immediate coming of another age. They tolerate no whining and supineness, as though the Gospel were a failure, rather than the power of God to salvation for every man, and for mankind at large. The apostles do not teach the churches as though an unbelieving human soul could be threshed into the obedience of love through the happening of great disasters to the elements of this earthly sphere; or as though a believing

soul could be excused from the daily ministrations of careful, loving service toward others, while waiting for the catastrophe that becomes the object of mocking when it is predicted as surely about to come, and yet does not fall. For these reasons, the inspiration of the New Testament is not to be questioned, or its moral and religious doctrine regarded as weakened in authority, because some of its writings undoubtedly show the mistaken hope of the entire apostolic Church, that Jesus would in that age return to earth.

It is to the truth of the Gospel as taught by Christ and the apostles in the New Testament that we refer for our final objective standard, in matters of Christian faith and conduct. In the light of this reference all the moral and religious teachings of the Bible itself are to be tested and understood. In this way also a reconciliation of the demands of the enlightened and sensitive Christian conscience with the opinions and sentiments of the biblical writers can be accomplished. A conflict is thus prevented between what the Christian thinks and feels and what the Bible teaches; and the sacred Scriptures, considered in their entirety and understood in the relations of part to part and of each part to the central facts and truths of all, become the rule of faith and practice.

The argument for the inspiration of the Bible which may be derived from the nature of its moral and religious contents, we do not need to enter upon in detail. To present it thoroughly would require nothing less than an exhibition of the whole circuit of biblical religion, in its strength and beauty, as a doctrine and as a life.

CHAPTER X.

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE BIBLICAL BOOKS.

The questions, Who was the author of this ancient writing? and, What was the date at which, and the circumstances under which, it was composed? are ordinarily regarded as purely critical questions. They are certainly in all cases questions of historical fact; and it is only by historical criticism that we can arrive at a certified knowledge of this kind of fact. But the question of the authorship of the *biblical* books, and even of the date and circumstances of their origin, has hitherto been regarded chiefly as a theological or religious question. And yet such a question can never by any possibility really be other than one of historical fact.

The reason for such an anomalous position of the biblical books is not difficult to discover. Some of them either directly or impliedly announce their own authors. Others of them are referred to by subsequent productions under names supposed to be those of the composers of the books themselves. For others of them the question of authorship has been held to be settled by ancient tradition. Now, no position is tenable except the one that, as regards the date, manner, and human agent, of their composition, we are to determine the case of the *biblical* books by precisely the

same rules as those which apply to other ancient writings. Questions of this sort cannot be argued dogmatically or speculatively; they cannot be settled by inference from moral and religious principles, or spiritually discerned. They are simply questions of historical fact; they can be treated honestly and intelligently in no other way.

Yet the answers we give to questions of the authorship of the biblical books cannot fail to have an influence on our conception of the origin and nature of the Bible as a whole. If the author of any particular part of Scripture is known to have been an inspired organ of divine revelation, it follows that the work he composed may also be considered to be inspired. But in the case of most of the biblical books we are obliged to reason in another way. We have the books, and their possession is a fact of which we are sure. We can test their spiritual quality by applying to them the standards of the Gospel facts and truths,—the enlightened Christian consciousness making the application. We can conclude that, when thus tested, they seem to be the work of inspired minds. This conclusion may be reached and adhered to without our attaining any certain knowledge as to who were their particular authors. Thus it may be asked with force and pertinency, What difference does it make whether, or not, the prophet Isaiah wrote the last part of the book which bears his name? It is certainly a perfect masterpiece of prophetic inspired writing, whoever its author may have been. It may also be said that Canticles and Proverbs would be no worse than they are if the tradition that Solomon was their author were found

to be true; and many of the Psalms could be no better even if David were known to be their author.

There are other classes of critical questions relating to the authorship of the biblical books which cannot be disposed of with the same indifference. Many of the later writings, although they contain no critical judgment upon the question who wrote the earlier writings, nevertheless assume the traditional view and refer to them under a certain title. In particular, much of the Pentateuch is referred to Moses,—not, indeed, as having written it, but as having been the medium through which its contents were brought to the people of Israel. The question of the authorship of the Pentateuch seems, therefore, to assume the aspect of an important dogmatic and religious question. And yet—we affirm again—the question who wrote any ancient writing can never become anything other than a question of historical fact. It can never, in itself considered, be rightly settled except by the application of the standards of historical criticism. It is not a question of dogma, or of moral sentiment, or of religious faith; it can never be made such by any amount of declaration to that effect in creeds and symbols, or by the hopes and fears of the individual believer.

By far the most difficult cases are those where the conclusion that certain writings were not written by a certain author would involve a charge of literary forgery. The most important instance of this kind is the Gospel of John. This Gospel obviously intends to be understood as the work of the beloved apostle. It aims to produce this impression in indirect ways—in

ways that seem artful and immoral when judged by a Christian conscience, provided the impression does not correspond to the fact. Now our conception of Christ and true Christianity is so dependent upon this Gospel, which seems to lay open the very "heart" of our Lord's personality and instruction, and to give to Him that unique position which is His due, not only in human history, but in relation to the eternal Divine Being, that we cannot regard the question of its authorship otherwise than with the most intense religious interest. Yet this, too, is, of course, primarily, a question of historical fact. Other instances of literary forgery alleged by some critics of the Bible are by no means so important. But we can never regard such a question otherwise than as a serious one.

Still it must be remembered that whenever the claim to be the work of a certain author can be shown to have originated subsequently to the book itself, the nature of the case is entirely changed. We have no longer, then, to decide whether being guilty of literary forgery is in any circumstances compatible with being an inspired author of sacred Scripture; we have rather simply to decide whether any mistaken views as to the authorship of a writing have been slipped into this Scripture. Indeed, in some cases, it would seem that such mistakes might be regarded as merely scribal, and no more an integral part of the Bible than are the mistaken insertions and explanations of the copyists of the Greek New-Testament manuscripts.

Still further, is it only fair to the facts of history to remember—what a study of all ancient literature shows

us—that the use of another's name to endorse, as it were, a composition of one's own, was a very different affair from what it is now, in the time when the biblical books were written. Such a deed by no means involved any such moral obliquity as belongs to it in the present age. Indeed, it was not infrequently resorted to, without intention of dishonesty, in the promulgation of moral and religious views.

The authorship and date of most of the Old-Testament writings, and of some of those of the New Testament, will never be known with certainty. There is a large part of sacred Scripture, therefore, the inspiration of which we cannot prove by arguing, from other sources than the nature of the writing itself. Of that part of the Bible, however, whose doctrinal and practical importance is supreme, the case is somewhat different. The claim of the Gospels and principal Epistles to come either directly from apostles, or from apostolic men who were familiar with the teaching of the apostles, can be established on historical grounds. These considerations, on the whole, much relieve the pressure which we should otherwise feel in critically considering the authorship of the biblical books.

The biblical writings may be divided, with reference to the question of authorship, into two general classes. One of these classes includes those books that are compilations or composite structures and growths; and that, therefore, in the form in which they now exist, must be said to be the work of several authors. The other class includes those books which are the work of one person; of which, accordingly, one person is the

author in the fullest sense of the word. Among the books of the former class important differences may also arise, according as the work of one or more of the hands laboring upon the product was a work of composing certain parts or a work of compilation merely. Various examples under this general class might be cited. The book which goes by the name of Isaiah is probably the work of two great inspired men,—the author of the last part not being the author of the first part. The Book of Psalms is a compilation of poems, including several minor divisions called "books," written by an unknown number of authors. The nature of the Book of Proverbs is somewhat similar. The Pentateuch is a most interesting and complicated instance under this same class.

Each of the first three Evangelists—to cite a somewhat different instance from any of the foregoing—must, in some sort, be regarded as a genuine *author* of a Gospel; that is, the personality of each Evangelist gives us the reason why his work has certain characteristics which pervade it, and which distinguish it from the work of the other two. But, on the other hand, in some respects each of the first three Gospels must be regarded as a compilation; it consists of material which the others have in common with it, and which was of a traditional kind more or less prepared before the author of the particular Gospel took it in hand to modify and rearrange it.

Important conclusions with regard to the nature of the inspiration of some of the biblical books follow from the facts just stated. Such facts are plainly incompatible

with any theory of the infallibility or absolutely errorless character of the books. Of course few persons would maintain that the absolutely errorless text of sacred Scripture corresponded precisely to the text of any of the translations in which the great majority of Christian people always have to find *their* Bible. Neither can it be maintained that the quality of infallibility belongs to the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts from which these translations have been made. In the most favorable case, infallibility could only be claimed for their lost originals, as they came from the hands of their inspired authors. But these we know the nature of only by copies of copies, etc.

It is difficult—nay, impossible—even to conceive of what could be meant by "infallible inspiration," in the case of books that have a very composite authorship, or are of the nature of literary growths. How could it be maintained that the scores of authors, compilers, and scribes down to the one giving to it the last touches subsequent to the date of Ezra, who have produced by their combined activity the finished original of the Pentateuch, were all so inspired, that in their altering and amending, their adding and connecting together, their explaining and interpolating, etc., they have in no case admitted the slightest error of fact or of opinion? For the Pentateuch is the record of a history and a legal code that embody the results of the divine discipline and self-revelation for Israel, extending through hundreds of years.

The satisfactory answer to the question, What is the Bible? so far as it is dependent upon the results of critical

inquiry into the authorship and date of the biblical books, demands a careful survey of the whole field of so-called "biblical introduction" or "biblical criticism." Nothing like this can, of course, be attempted at the present time. We shall simply endeavor to illustrate the subject by remarks upon two or three selected examples. And, in the first place, we raise the inquiry as to the authorship of the Pentateuch or five books ascribed to Moses. In reply, we briefly indicate the reasons which have led modern biblical students to the remarkable unanimity of opinion that exists upon certain points in the inquiry, as well as those reasons which occasion serious differences of opinion upon other points. It should be remembered, however, that an intelligent judgment upon any of these points requires a special and technical education, and often, even, a life-long period of toil.

The traditions which are embodied in the title of the "Pentateuch" or the "Books of Moses," for the first five writings of the Old Testament, are undoubtedly ancient.* The oldest translations of the Hebrew adopt the division into five parts. The Church Fathers ascribe these writings to Moses, and in doing this they follow unquestioningly the Jewish tradition found also in Philo Judæus, Josephus, and the Talmud. Some exceptions to this view of the authorship of the Pentateuch are, indeed, found very early—for the most part among heretical Christian sects and without any basis in a knowledge of critical reasons. Doubts as to whether Moses wrote all of these five books occurred here and there among

*D. S. S., i., p. 500 f.

learned Jews in the middle ages. After the Reformation, especially in the second half of the seventeenth century, the traditional view was somewhat sharply attacked; and then, during almost the entire eighteenth century, this view reigned undisturbed. It was about the beginning of the present century that the later origin of the Pentateuch was positively maintained and defended in detail by biblical scholars of great ability and learning,—especially by Vater and De Wette.

The modern phase of the question, Who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, ascribed by the tradition of the Jewish synagogue to Moses? is especially characterized by two great discoveries. These are the discovery that the Pentateuch is a composite writing into which several important documents have been incorporated; and the discovery that the relation between the law of Deuteronomy and the laws of the middle books of the Pentateuch is not such as was formerly supposed. As early as about the middle of the last century, a French physician of the Roman Catholic confession, J. Astruc by name († 1776), put forth the conjecture that Moses compiled the Book of Genesis from two principal, and as many as ten minor, documents. The two principal documents were called, from the Hebrew word for the divine name used in them, an "*Elohim*-writing" and a "*Jehovah*-writing." Since his time, the most painstaking and minute analysis has repeatedly been made of the contents of the entire Pentateuch (including, also, the Book of Joshua), and an almost unanimous agreement reached among Old-Testament scholars as to the

existence of such different documents, and, within certain comparatively narrow limits, as to how they are to be marked off.

Again, certain writers called in question the order of the different codes which obviously exist in the books of the Pentateuch, as that order is assumed to be defined by the very name Deuteronomy (or "second law"); they insisted that the version of the law which is recorded in the last book of the Pentateuch was really the earliest, and that the laws of the preceding books were actually the latest to be enacted. This reversal of the order of the Deuteronomic law and the laws of the middle books is also now almost universally accepted by Old-Testament scholars; although as to many details, and especially as to the date and character of many of the laws of the middle books, much disagreement still exists.

The complete change of view already accomplished upon two such important points has secured an almost equally complete change of view concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch. For it would plainly be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to maintain that Moses wrote a work composed of several documents bearing the marks of a different character, origin, and date, and giving a record of laws as enacted by himself in an order quite the reverse of that in which they were actually enacted. The result has been—and to say this is only to state a matter of fact—that, with very few exceptions anywhere, and with almost no exceptions in those places where the Old Testament is studied with most freedom and breadth of learning, the whole world

of scholars has abandoned the ancient tradition that the Pentateuch, in any such form as we now have it, was the work of Moses.

It is, of course, impossible to give to the reader of the Bible, who is not familiar with Hebrew and with the facts and laws of historical criticism, a satisfactory statement of the evidence upon which the tradition of the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch has been abandoned. Some of this evidence will, however, be briefly presented. Certain matters should be mentioned at this point, about which many writers who maintain the traditional view seem to aim at spreading confusion rather than clearness of knowledge and thought among the people. And, first, the entire question is not one on the settlement of which our Christian faith, or our attitude as Christians toward the Bible, can properly be made to depend. The nature of Christianity, the nature of the religious doctrine and conduct enforced by the sacred Scriptures, and even the essential nature of the Old-Testament religion and writings in their relation to the divine revelation of truth and the inspiration of the human soul, do not in any way require that we should hold Moses to have been the author of the Pentateuch.

Secondly, it is unfair and injurious to the popular confidence in the Bible, to represent the case as though one were compelled either to hold with Kuenen and Wellhausen that these writings originated at a very late date, largely in fraud, and that the religion they inculcate is purely of natural origin; or else hold with the Jewish Rabbis, and a relatively few biblical students of

to-day, that Moses with his own hand, under divine influence, wrote the entire five books called by his name. The alternative is not the rejection of Old-Testament supernatural religion or else the synagogue theory of the origin of the Pentateuch. When, then, authorities are cited and objections offered to certain views of so-called "destructive critics," it should not be understood that these authorities are cited and objections offered in favor of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

Again, the nature of the question should always be borne in mind. The question is one of simple historical fact; it is a question about the origin and date of a certain piece of writing. Evidence of a mathematically demonstrative character cannot possibly be offered by either side. It would not be strange, then, but just the contrary, if there should be far from a general agreement, not to say a complete uniformity, of opinion upon many of the almost countless subordinate questions connected with the main inquiry. Such lack of agreement would not necessarily prejudice the trustworthiness of the general conclusion reached upon the question, whether Moses is the author of the Pentateuch. This fact, we insist, should be constantly borne in mind. For the attempt is quite too often made to create the impression that the critics are all out of harmony with each other as to the number and nature of the documents from which the Pentateuch is composed; therefore, the inference is suggested, we may believe that the Pentateuch is not composite at all, but was all written by one hand, and that the hand of Moses. Now, the reverse both of these alleged facts and of the

conclusion drawn from them is true. The agreement among the critics as to the existence, characteristics, and limits of the separate documents composing the five books called after Moses is remarkable; for the most important particulars it is quite complete; upon many minute features it is exceedingly impressive instead of being disappointing. It is all the while growing more nearly unanimous against the traditional view that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. This agreement is the more remarkable because it is shared in by critics of all manner of religious attitudes toward Old-Testament revelation. It is also an agreement that has been gradually *forced by the evidence* upon the minds of many scholars who formerly controverted it.

The venerable tradition, more than two thousand years old, which asserts the Mosaic authorship of the entire Pentateuch, stands opposed to the almost unanimous verdict of modern biblical study. The tradition, although it is so ancient, has absolutely no valid claims that justify its uncritical acceptance. Its claims are not warranted by the Bible itself; for the Bible nowhere asserts that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, with the exception of the so-called Book of the Covenant, the body of Deuteronomy, and a few small fragments. That the law of the Lord came by Moses, the writers of the Bible, in common with the nation of Israel generally, do indeed believe. And in spite of all the really "destructive" work done by certain forms of modern criticism, there are still good grounds left upon which to establish this belief. The Pentateuch also speaks throughout of this and that particular code

being enacted by Moses at a particular time, and under particular circumstances. If, however, the Pentateuch really originated in the way in which modern scholarship is nearly unanimous in holding that it did, it can at most only be said that the later workmen upon this great collection of sacred laws, which was accumulating through so many centuries, had no means other than tradition or conjecture for knowing when and by whom came any of its particular enactments.

What, then, are the proofs that the Pentateuch is a composite literary product; and that critical examination has succeeded in analyzing it into those documents of which it is really composed? In replying to this inquiry it is pertinent to notice, in the first place, that part of the Pentateuch (the Book of Genesis at least) is plainly composite, even if the writing of the whole work be attributed to Moses. For the history of several centuries previous to the era of Moses is given in Genesis before the author begins to speak of events even alleged to have occurred during the life of Moses. The materials of this history, at least, certainly existed, either in the form of oral traditions or written records, before the time of Moses. That the other books besides Genesis are also composite is proved by considerations like the following.

The laws of the Pentateuch bear the marks of having been enacted at widely separated periods of time.* Some of these laws are of great antiquity, for they are such as would fit into the circumstances of the Mosaic era alone, or they have references to a state of things

*D. S. S., i., p. 504 f.

known to have been prevalent at the time of the Mosaic era. Such are the laws referring to the dismissal of the he-goat into the *wilderness* (Lev. xvi. 10, 21 f.), the reference to the *camp* in telling how to treat the victims of sacrifices (Lev. iv. 11 f. and vi.), the command forbidding to slay animals elsewhere than before the door of the *tabernacle* (Lev. xvii. 1 f.), etc. On the contrary, other laws cannot be assigned to this same era without very artificial and unlikely assumptions, such as that Moses was inspired prophetically to foresee and legislate for a state of things that did not come about until long after his own time. Instances of such laws are the law for the *kings* of Israel (Deut. xvii. 14–20), the law against removing *land-marks* (xix. 14), the laws for selecting forces to go out to battle (xx. 5 f.), for purifying *houses* (Lev. xiv. 33 f.), for managing fields, vineyards, and olive-orchards, etc.

Moreover, repeated and apparently contradictory versions of certain laws and ordinances indicate the composite structure of the Pentateuch. Legal enactments recited in Deuteronomy are given again in Leviticus in a form changed to suit the purpose of the latter. Such are the command forbidding to marry the wife of one's father (compare Deut. xxii. 30 and Lev. xviii. 8), the command punishing adultery with death, and the provision for the pay of the day-laborer. A number of laws found in Exodus and Leviticus have supplementary additions when they recur in Deuteronomy; this makes it difficult to regard them as the work of one author. Thus the law of Exodus (xxii. 16) concerning seduction is supplemented in Deuteronomy (xxii. 28 f.) by declaring

that seduction makes an indissoluble marriage-bond; and the law against interest by declaring that it may be received from strangers. Various other similar instances occur. Not infrequently contradictory or inconsistent provisions appear when we try to regard the entire list of laws as belonging to the code of one author. Especially is this true of the fact that in the middle books of the Pentateuch the Levites appear as only temple-servants, while the priests are "sons of Aaron"; but in Deuteronomy the priests appear as "sons of Levi" in general. Minute inconsistencies occur which can best be explained by referring them to two versions of one law, or to two laws enacted at one time upon one subject-matter; for example, where in Numbers, in several places (iv. 3, 22, 30, 47), the service of the Levites extends from thirty to fifty, but in another place (viii. 23–26) from twenty-five to fifty.

Another proof of the composite nature of the Pentateuch is found in the fact that many of its historical notices and accounts bear the marks of having originated from different sources, and, in some instances, at widely separated intervals of time. Thus in Genesis alone we have two narratives of the creation, two of the deluge in Noah's time (which are pieced together in such a way as to leave standing certain apparent discrepancies, especially as to the number of clean beasts taken into the ark), two accounts of the names of Bethel and of Beersheba, divergent traditions concerning the names of Esau's wives, and of Israel, etc.*

Outside of Genesis, moreover, something similar

*D. S. S., i., p. 507 f.

occurs. For example, the giving of the quails with the manna is twice recorded, once in Numbers (xi.) and once in Exodus (xvi.). So does the language in which Moses is told to appear before Pharaoh, and the reply he makes, Exodus vi. 10–12, assume that this is to be his first appearance, and yet three previous appearances have already been narrated. In a history composed by one author who is contemporaneous with most of the events he narrates, all this seems extremely unlikely to occur. But with an ancient book which has grown up as modern biblical study conceives the Pentateuch to have done, all this is what might be expected.

A careful reading of the Pentateuch reveals many apparent discrepancies, especially in matters of numbers and dates. The way proposed for reconciling these discrepancies is perpetually changing but never settled. Now if the composite nature of the Pentateuch, as the work of various authors and the result of a combination of various traditions and documents, be admitted, the character and the existence of such discrepancies are explained. With the design to establish this critical conclusion, and not to point out historical defects in sacred Scripture, we call attention to a few such facts as follow.* When Abraham was a hundred years old his faith was sorely tried in the effort to realize that at so advanced an age he could hope for a son; and yet another tradition represents him as taking a wife forty years later, and having by her six sons. When Isaac was a hundred years old and ready to die, Jacob departed to find a wife; but

* D. S. S., i., p. 508 f.

another tradition represents him as returning eighty years later to bury his father.

A single example in respect to numbers will suffice to illustrate the entire class. In Numbers (i. 46 and ii. 32) the men fit for war in Israel are placed at 603,550; but this is about twenty-seven times as many as the number of the Levites, who took the place of all the first-born of Israel. Surely, whatever effort may be made to reconcile in fact this class of discrepancies, their bare existence in such form and abundance seems inconsistent with the theory that a single contemporaneous historian composed the writings in which they occur.

So, too, the atmosphere and tone of speech in various places, as well as certain indirect allusions, indicate the composite structure of the Pentateuch. The Book of Deuteronomy everywhere implies the actual occupation of the promised land; but Exodus and Leviticus make frequent references to the journey through the wilderness as still in progress, and "the land which I will give to you" is the formula with which they speak of Palestine. In one place in Genesis (xii. 6) we find the author referring to the time when the Canaanite was "in the land" as very remote from his own; but this, of course, could not be true of Moses, who did not live to see the Canaanite expelled from "the land." Surely the plain historical statement prefixed to the list of Edomite kings (Gen. xxxvi. 31): "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel," could never have been written by a man who died centuries before Israel had any king whatever. Similar expres-

sions quite unbefitting Moses or a contemporary of his are such as these: "And when the Israelites were *in the wilderness* they found a man"; "These are the words which Moses spoke unto all Israel *beyond Jordan*"; "Thou shalt not remove the landmark which thy *ancestors* established," etc. The name "Dan" is found in Genesis (xiv. 14) as the name for a city; and yet we are elsewhere told in the Old Testament that the city did not bear this name until the time of Judges. The song of Balaam in Numbers (xxiv. 7) prophesies that the king of Israel shall be greater than Agag; and yet Agag was a contemporary of Saul. So Og is designated as the *last* of the giants, and his "bedstead" elaborately described; although his death at the latest occurred only a few months before Moses.

Still further, the way in which some portions of the Pentateuch are actually referred to antecedent written sources, and some few portions only to Moses himself as the writer of them, shows that it virtually regards itself as a composite literary structure. In Numbers (xxi. 14), for example, the "Book of the Wars of Jehovah" is referred to; but such a book could not have had any material for its composition previous to Moses' death. Why should the author of Deuteronomy, if it were Moses himself, distinguish himself from Moses, as he does in several places (compare i. 5; iv. 8)? Why should he put in antiquarian notices, which would have no pertinency as addressed by Moses to men of his own time?* Moreover, many indications show that he is handling freely and rhetorically a code of laws already

* For instances, see ii. 10–12, 20–23; iii. 11; iv. 41, 47.

in existence, instead of enacting one or copying one from existing manuscripts.

But, more particularly, the way in which the contents of the Hexateuch (or Pentateuch, including the book of Joshua, which is, on good ground, connected with the preceding five books as belonging to the same literary structure) have been analyzed into several main component parts, with limits and characteristics that are in many cases very plainly marked and thoroughly well agreed upon by the great body of critical students, is itself as near to a demonstration of the originally composite nature of these writings as anything in the form of literary criticism can well be. A certain living and spiritual unity, indeed, belongs to the history of Israel and to the sacred law that was so influential in determining the course of that history. We have no real warrant for speaking, as has sometimes been done, of two antagonistic forms of law, a prophetic and a priestly, which struggled against each other for supremacy; although it is true that the tone and spirit of the law of Deuteronomy differs from that of the middle books of the Pentateuch—the former being more ethical and democratic, and the latter more theocratic and symbolical. But the unity of the law of Israel is due to a unity of religious impulse arising from one Spirit of revelation running through the whole, and not to a unity of authorship in respect to its record.

In a popular work like the present it is not feasible to present in detail the evidence on which biblical study relies to sustain the conclusion that several main documents, with characteristics of their own and showing

unmistakable signs of a different origin, may be traced throughout the first six books of the Old Testament. This evidence will doubtless continue to seem conclusive to biblical scholars; indeed it will probably, within certain limits, still further accumulate. It has already produced a marked agreement among all the leading critics with respect to the existence and limits of these documents. This agreement covers large portions of some books and yet it extends to minute details.* It is an agreement which reaches to exact verses and parts of verses that are assigned by common consent to this or that one among the several documents. It covers the following main conclusions: There exist in the Hexateuch two fundamental sources which, throughout Genesis and the first six chapters of Exodus, are distinguished by the use of different terms for the divine name (Elohim and Jehovah), and which have therefore been called "Elohistic" and "Jehovistic." The distinction of these two sources is no longer dependent, however, on this one particular, but is based upon a great variety of characteristics; so that it might be well to abandon the terms "Elohistic" and "Jehovistic" were they not so firmly attached to these sources. A further distinction of two groups of writings in the so-called Elohistic portions is made by almost unanimous consent of Old-Testament critics; of these one group is mainly historical and the other is mainly legal and ritualistic.

It is also matter of common agreement that the work of two authors can easily be detected in Deuteronomy;

* See the tables in D. S S., i., p. 517 f.

indeed this fact, at least, is tolerably patent to the unlearned but intelligent and careful reader. To one of these two authors is due the substance of those legal contents which constitute the body of the book; to the other the work of revising and re-editing these contents with the addition of considerable new material The hand of the same later workman is apparent throughout Joshua as well, and perhaps, as a redactor, throughout all the Hexateuch. Other smaller documents, and also oral traditions—ancient songs, scraps of history, groups of laws, separate legal enactments—have been woven in with the three main written documents. The whole had already been much worked over by many scribes, before the Hebrew manuscripts of the first six books reached the form in which they served as the basis for our present text of the Hexateuch.

It has been said by a conservative Old-Testament critic that the fact of the existence of these characteristically separate sources in the Pentateuch and in Joshua is inconsistent with their being the work of Moses. To us it seems quite incredible that the composition of one man, most of which deals with contemporaneous laws and history, should be capable of being thus separated into well-marked constituent parts *with a practical unanimity among so many different scholars.* The only satisfactory explanation of the possibility of accomplishing such a work of analysis is the fact that the analysis is substantially correct. And when we find that these different parts, on being united, actually make three great documents, each of which has

its marked characteristics with respect to contents, purpose, and way of looking at religious history and law (and probably also style), the evidence comes as near a demonstration as the nature of such evidence admits. Undoubtedly the first six books of the Bible are a composite literary structure, the sources and materials of which came from different times and authors; *they could not, therefore, have been all the work of Moses.*

But when the further questions are raised as to when, by whom, and how, these sources were originated and the different parts put together to constitute the whole as we now have it, no satisfactory answers can be given. Upon these points, instead of great agreement among the critics, we find the beginning of indefinite disagreement. Here also two other important questions arise: the first of these is the question, When and by whom was Deuteronomy written? The second question may be expressed in the following somewhat roundabout manner: Did the body of the ritualistic laws, and the history pertaining to them, which are contained in the middle books of the Pentateuch, originate as a growth during the period of the growth of the Deuteronomic law, or to any extent as genuine Mosaic legislation; or did it originate about the time of the Exile, in an effort of the priests to enact a ritual that should govern the Jews on their return, and for this purpose have the precedent and sanction of the name of Moses?

To answer either of the questions just raised implies an immense amount of technical work for which only a few trained scholars are prepared. Indeed, nothing equal to a perfect confidence can be attained with ref

erence to many points involved in these two main inquiries. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with a brief statement of our opinion, and of certain reasons for holding such opinion. With that changed view of the relation existing between the Old-Testament law and the Gospel, for which the teaching of the New Testament has prepared us, the question of the exact order of the so-called Mosaic legislation loses its supreme and decisive importance.

Deuteronomy was not, in its present form, throughout the work of Moses. Its author plainly distinguishes himself from Moses; and both ancient and more recent elements of legislation can be detected in it.* But the great body of its laws correspond to those of that section of the Torah which is found in Exodus xx.–xxiii., xxxiv., and Leviticus xvii.–xxvi. These are the very most ancient parts of the entire Mosaic law. Traces of great antiquity are found in the fact that the command not to let the body of one hanged remain all night on the tree (Deut. xxi. 23) corresponds to the treatment given to the corpse of the king of Ai (Josh. viii. 29); that the "testimony" laid before the king at the crowning of Joash refers to the law of Deut. xvii. 19, etc. All the references and allusions to the "law," in general, which occur throughout the earlier prophetical and historical writings, appear to accord best with this Deuteronomic version; indeed, it is difficult to show the existence, at the time when these earlier writings were composed, of an elaborate ritualistic service and code, such as the middle books of the Pentateuch

* D. S. S., i., p. 527 f.

record. At the same time, however, there exist many touches in Deuteronomy which seem plainly to imply the work of a later hand.

In 2 Kings (xxii. 8 f., and compare 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30 f.) there is an exceedingly interesting account of the "discovery" of a written book of the law. The event was in the reign of Josiah. This king appears not to have known of the existence of a written law,—to say nothing of his not being aware of the nature of its contents. Now, the reforms which followed in Josiah's reign are such as to imply his new acquaintance with certain special provisions of *Deuteronomy*. And it is much the most probable view that this law-book, then newly discovered, was the one incorporated into the present Book of Deuteronomy and nearly identical with the substance of its legal contents. That a large part of this body of legal contents did actually go back to Moses for its origin, there is no satisfactory reason for denying; and this view seems to us far preferable, not only in the light of moral and religious but also of critical considerations, to the view which would regard almost the entire work as the result of pious fraud.

Out of this ancient law-book of Mosaic and other old-time enactments, a pious Jew of the reign of Josiah composed the Book of Deuteronomy in substantially its present form. He handled his material in free and fine rhetorical style. He made Moses address ancient Israel with this law of Jehovah; and in using this rhetorical style he did no violence to the substantial truth, while he succeeded in giving (as the event proved) the "law" as a living force, as a voice of the Lord, to the people of his own day.

The rumor has already been somewhat widely spread abroad that certain Old-Testament critics, increasing in numbers and influence, consider much the greater part of the legislation and history in the middle books of the Pentateuch, to have originated about the time of the Exile. In its most extreme form this opinion will scarcely allow that any of Israel's elaborate ceremonial existed during the period of the early kings, or could have been known to the greater and earlier prophets. On the contrary, these critics regard this ceremonial and the writings which record it, as the result of an attempt of the Jewish priesthood to establish the later Judaism upon a basis of Mosaic authority. The names connected most prominently with this view are those of Kuenen and Wellhausen. Such an opinion we cannot accept; and to it the following, among other considerations, may be opposed.*

All that we really know of the age of Ezra and his successors induces us to look upon them as scribes, collectors, and revisers, not as authors of the sacred legal, and historical writings of Israel. They did, indeed, produce some of the later works of the Old Testament, but these works bear throughout, in their claims and character, the marks of this later age, whereas the books of the Hexateuch bear the marks of successive earlier ages. The work of scribes and revisers of legal literature presupposes that such literature exists ready to be revised.

The theory of Wellhausen is also opposed by a right conception of the nature and history of Old-Testament revealed religion. There is, indeed, much which is dark

* D. S. S., i., p. 530 f.

as respects its origin, and low as respects its moral tone, in the early religious history of Israel, as that history is recorded in the Hebrew writings. But the work of the prophets in the eighth century before Christ—and, therefore, long before Ezra's time—implies a previous course of the development of religious conceptions and of national experience under divine law. Everything in the character of the prophecy of the age shows a great *degeneracy* and *corruption* of the people of Israel in this century, a falling away under the influence of surrounding nations from the monotheism of Moses. Nor does this theory of Wellhausen do justice to the immense influence of that great general and prophet, Moses, who stands at the beginning of the national development, and by his leadership, teaching, and legislation, gives character and direction to it all. The conviction that the *very name* by which God was known as the Redeemer of Israel is of distinctively Mosaic origin, was wrought into the national self-consciousness.

A critical examination of that large and fundamental law-book which the theory we are discussing would refer to the period of the Exile shows that considerable portions of it are of very ancient, and probably of Mosaic origin.* According to one of the most prominent of these so-called "destructive" critics the principal part of this law-book comprises Exodus xxv.–xl. (except xxxii.–xxxiv.), Numbers i.–x., xv.–xix., xxv.–xxxvi., and Leviticus i.–xxvii. But to suppose that such a body of laws and history as this could be fabricated and foisted upon the community of Israel as genuinely Mosaic legis-

* D. S. S., i., p. 534 f.

lation seems to us absolutely incredible. But that this great law-book is to be recognized as only *one* part of the Hexateuch having an independent origin, that it was not all written by the hand of Moses, that it is a growth comprising many legal enactments which had at various times been admitted into the one great law called by the name of Israel's first great legislator, the "law of Moses,"—all this we have admitted as established by modern biblical study. But this is a very different conclusion from the one reached by the theory of Kuenen and Wellhausen.

Moreover, there is a certain amount of evidence that a somewhat elaborate ceremonial, and a somewhat extended written ritualistic law, goes back to the Mosaic era. It is true that the earlier history and the earlier prophetic writings are almost completely silent about such a cultus. But we can conjecture, from the nature of the case and from the history of similar religious institutions in other nations, how this silence might come about. The people of Israel through all this dark period had little or nothing to do with keeping to the letter of the written law. The very existence of such a law was often wholly unknown to them, and was only very imperfectly known to the great body of the priests. There is nothing impossible or even peculiar about such ignorance. There are lands to-day where the great body of Christian priests know little or nothing about the Christian Scriptures. During this period in Israel laws were often enacted that never went into execution, or did not stay in force for any length of time. In almost every land to-day there are many laws on the statute-books of which the people

know nothing; and even the law-makers and lawyers are ignorant of their very existence. Laws tend to become dead letters. The release of claims upon the Hebrew servant in the seventh year is an instance of such an Old-Testament law. Many laws, too, when in later times they became enacted or recorded in writing, only expressed common and unwritten law which had been for a long time previous in vogue as popular customs.

Finally, the laws of Israel, like the legal enactments of every other nation, were subject to changes; and so, of course, was the codification of them. It was peculiar to Israel, however, that its pious men justly regarded its laws as all falling under those great moral and religious principles that ruled the relations of the nation to Jehovah; and, therefore, as being true parts of the "law of Moses," since the law was *one law* and went back for its origin to the great prophet who had founded the national history in these principles.

We conclude, then, that both the ancient tradition which assigned the entire Pentateuch, with its legal and historical contents, to the great law-giver and prophet, Moses, and also the modern critical theory which regards this law and history, with its record, as in large measure the work of pious fraud accomplished at the time of the Exile, are unwarrantable. The enactment and the recording of these laws, as well as the incorporating of them in their historical setting, were by no means the work of Moses alone. Precisely how much of this work Moses did accomplish cannot be told with confidence. There is doubtless a large body of the legislation, both civil and ceremonial, both that which

arranges a cultus and that which defines and protects rights, which is genuinely Mosaic. *But the "law of the Lord" was a progressive revelation.* Moses, as the inspired servant of God, furnished its guiding ideas and great principles. Through all the centuries after his work was ended, under the impress and leading of the thought that they were in covenant with Jehovah as their Redeemer, the people of Israel kept receiving *the law* in many concrete provisions and enactments. Law-books, or collections of these enactments, with or without historical notices, began to be formed. The Book of Deuteronomy gives us the great body of this legislation as it existed, upon its Mosaic basis, in the reign of Josiah. And, finally, the Hexateuch gives the law and the early history of the nation as they were understood by the later workmen in Israel, and put into final shape at and soon after the age of Ezra.

The evidence upon which the present critical view of the origin of the first six books of the Bible rests is not likely to be shaken, as respects the principal features of that view. Such a view is indeed inconsistent with that theory of the origin and nature of sacred Scripture which prevailed so widely in the *post*-Reformation era. But it is not at all inconsistent with the doctrine of sacred Scripture as it is taught indirectly by the language of our Lord and His apostles; nor does it discredit the claim to revelation and inspiration made by the writers of either the Old Testament or the New.

We have dwelt at such length upon the case of the Hexateuch, because of the great interest which the problem of its authorship is creating at the present

time. Other questions concerning the authorship of the Old-Testament writings are just now relatively uninteresting and unimportant. We shall probably never be able to tell who wrote most of the Hebrew Bible, or at what date most of its books came into existence. But the relations in which they stand, as a whole or in particular, to the Gospel and to the writings of the New Testament, as well as our estimate of their character and value, are not greatly altered, are in no respect essentially changed, on that account.

The origin of the Synoptic (or first three) Gospels is the most wonderful of all literary problems. Certainly, in view of the relations which these writings sustain to the picture we have of the personality of Christ, no other literary problem is so important. These books exhibit many remarkable similarities and many no less remarkable differences. The differences are of such a nature, and so far plainly marked, that the writers of these books must be pronounced *authors* in a real sense of that term. Matthew, Mark, and Luke differ in the selection and arrangement of their material, in the general aspect of our Lord which they most prominently hold up to view, in the order and style of their composition, in the very *minutiæ* of their choice and sequence of words. They cannot, therefore, be regarded merely or mainly as copyists or compilers, or as penmen dictated to, as it were, without regard to their personality, by the Holy Spirit.

But these same writers also agree with each other in a very remarkable manner. They agree, as we should expect from the truthfulness and accuracy of their com-

mon picture of Christ, in having the same general progress and main divisions of their history. But they also tie, or couple, together certain groups of incidents which are not always connected in reality, in such a way as to show that this connection or grouping had been done before they composed their works,—either by previous written compositions from which they take common material, or by a uniform oral tradition. But more surprising is their frequent agreement, exact and extended, in the use of the same words and sentences, sometimes when the words used, or terms of expression employed, are very rare or even unique. These facts can be detected by a careful comparative study of the English New Testament. In certain cases, moreover, they agree verbally, when quoting from the Old Testament, in departing from both the original Hebrew and its Greek translation, the Septuagint.*

Such agreement and difference as the foregoing can be accounted for only by supposing that each one of the first three Gospels contains the following classes of elements: (1) Material which comes from oral tradition that has either been fixed by the early preaching of the apostles and other eye- and ear-witnesses, or has been imparted to the author by verbal communication of some informant; (2) material from previously-written documents, either our canonical Gospels or some one or more of the written sources which they have incorporated; and (3) material that comes from personal

*For a detailed statement of these phenomena, see articles by the author in the Bibliotheca Sacra, January and April, 1869, and compare D. S. S., i., p. 547 f.

reflection, or is due to the linguistic and other peculiarities of the author. In other words, the contents of these Gospels are the result of a previous process of preaching, writing, hearing, and reflecting; and they are dependent upon each other, and upon common oral and written sources, to a degree which it is difficult to determine.

The order in which the first three Gospels arose is uncertain. But two things may be regarded as pretty well established: The Gospel of Mark in its present form is the oldest of the existing Greek Gospels; and an Aramaic original lies back of one or more Greek documents made use of by Matthew and Luke. How much work in the way of writing narratives of the life of our Lord had previously been accomplished is clearly implied by the prologue of the Third Gospel. As in the case of the Hexateuch, so in the case of these priceless memoirs of Christ, we shall probably never be able to reconstruct in theory the exact process of oral and written composition which has entered into each. But, unlike the case of the Hexateuch, the process of the formation of these memoirs was a brief one and speedily connects each one of them with the trusted eye- and ear-witnesses who knew the facts of the life of which they treat. Moreover, the tradition which connects the authorship of the First Gospel, though only indirectly, and that of the Second and Third, directly, with the names by which we know them, is able to justify itself against all the attacks of hostile criticism.

The proofs of the inspiration of the Synoptic Gospels are obviously to be found in the appreciative, pen

etrating, and holy spirit, in which these wonderful biographies apprehend and narrate the deeds and sayings of Jesus Christ, and teach the true significance of His personality, of His life and His death.

No other question concerning the authorship of a biblical writing compares for a moment in importance with that concerning the authorship of the Gospel ascribed to John. Our estimate of the inspiration and historical and doctrinal value of the first three Gospels would not be affected by finding that we must interpret the phrases "according to Matthew," "according to Mark," "according to Luke," as meaning only a loose connection between the contents of the books as we have them and the persons known by these names. The Gospel of Matthew, for example, does not announce itself as written by Matthew; it is only announced by an ancient tradition as being *according* to Matthew.

But we cannot regard the critical inquiry, Who wrote the Fourth Gospel? as a comparatively unimportant one.* For if the Apostle John did not write this book, then the book itself must be regarded as a forgery, and a forgery that is all the more odious because it is in many places concealed and sly. There can be no doubt that the disciple repeatedly referred to as the one "whom Jesus loved" is meant to be designated as the author of the Gospel (see xxi. 24). There are subtle indications, too,—such as the implied acquaintance of the author with the high-priest Annas, and the fact that he does not find it necessary to distin-

* D. S. S., i., p. 561 f.

guish the John whom he does name (the Baptist) from the unnamed disciple—which, on account of their subtlety, emphasize all the more the claim of the writer to be the beloved apostle. But it would surely require very clear and strong evidence to convince one who properly feels the purity and loftiness of the Christian character of this writer, that he could be guilty of an *artful* literary forgery. In saying this, we are not shrinking in the least from the position that the question of the authorship of a biblical book is a question of fact, and that such a question must be settled according to historical and critical principles. The impression we have as to the character of any writer is also a fact; and when the question becomes one between the justness of that impression and a theory of forgery, the impression may be a very important and even decisive fact.

We cannot consider, even briefly, the grounds of attack and defence which have been gone over in recent times, touching the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. It is enough to say that the evidence cited by the contending parties is both external and internal,—that is, it has to do with the witnesses which can be summoned from the early history of the Christian Church, and with the character of the work itself as showing the probability or improbability that the Apostle John was its author.

It has been clearly established by the modern contest over this New-Testament writing that Justin Martyr was acquainted with the Fourth Gospel, made use of it, and developed his own doctrine from it. But the

"First Apology" of this Church Father cannot well be placed later than about 145 A. D. It would seem demonstrated, then, that no sufficient time for the success of such a forgery as this would be, exists between the date of Justin's First Apology and the death of the Apostle John. Indeed, the citation of this Gospel in certain very ancient heretical writings enables us to carry the date of its origin back into the first quarter of the second century. Moreover, the New Testament itself contains two notices confirmatory of the genuineness of the Gospel of John. One of these is the notice of that writer who added the twenty-first chapter to the Gospel, and who distinguishes himself from its author (see verse 24); the other is the recognition given in Second Peter (i. 14) to the tradition referred to in the Gospel itself (John xxi. 18 f.). The external evidence is then, on the whole, as complete as could reasonably be expected.

The principal objection which has been urged by modern criticism against the genuineness of the Gospel of John, on grounds of internal evidence, is taken from the marked difference between the picture of Jesus which it gives and that given by the other Gospels. The other Gospels all unite in one substantially harmonious view of His personality. But the Fourth Gospel is thought by some critics so strongly to exhibit certain tendencies prevalent in the early part of the second century, with reference to the nature of our Lord's character and work, as to make it evident that these *tendencies*, and not the knowledge of an eye- and ear-witness like the apostle, have been its source.

Now it must be admitted that the first three Gospels

stand together in one group, and in many particulars contrast strongly with the Gospel ascribed to John The former are more simple narratives, and were com posed by putting together the material, consisting of oral tradition and written documents, which was accessible to their authors. But the Gospel of John is much more a work of reflection; it is shaped by ideas. A certain lofty conception of the personality of Christ, which is introduced in the very first sentences of the book, has evidently moulded and fused and glorified the historical facts. Its picture of the Redeemer is not, then, exactly like that which was held up by the early preachers of the Gospel, by those who at first proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah, crucified once but now risen and glorified at the right hand of God. Saint John's picture of Jesus is an outgrowth of much inspired meditation and affectionate care. And doubtless the ideas of the author have shaped his view and statement of all the historical facts and of the discourses of Jesus, much more than it has been customary to admit. It is for this reason that these discourses resemble the style and wording of the First Epistle of John. So true is this that sometimes it seems difficult to tell whether we are listening to what our Lord actually says, or rather to what His beloved disciple saw to be the hidden meaning and most far-reaching import of His words. But all these facts, rightly considered, are unfavorable rather than favorable to the theory that the book is a forgery.

It is the work of Christian apologetics, as applied to this remarkable New-Testament writing, to show how we may harmonize the admitted difference in the two

pictures of our Lord with the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel. The work has been done with great painstaking and minuteness by many scholars. On the whole it bears out our unshaken confidence that the Fourth Gospel is by the hand of the Apostle John.

The positive internal evidence in favor of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel is, when carefully wrought out and candidly regarded, exceedingly strong. Some of this evidence consists in those broad outlines which it is so difficult for the literary forger to draw with a close fidelity to truth; some of it consists in many delicate and subtile indications of that historical accuracy which belongs to the eye- and ear-witness who has observed and remembered with a loving care. The writer—for example—remembers how the next day after, about the tenth hour, John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples (see i. 35 f.); the name of the servant whose ear was struck off by Peter still lingers in his memory; and he hears again the sharp ring of the master's command, "Put up thy sword."

On the whole, therefore, from the point of view reached in the progress of historical and critical study, it can truthfully be claimed that the vigorous and determined assaults made upon the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel have greatly increased instead of impairing our confidence in the traditional view. In this regard there is a marked difference between it and the Hexateuch. The unlearned Christian believer may still read meditatively this charming tribute of the love of a disciple to his Lord. He may do this believing that he is receiving, as he reads, the inspired instructions of

the apostle who intimately knew and profoundly understood this Lord. Nor can he well fail to believe that, when he himself understands what he reads, he draws near to the very heart of Christ.

Our discussion of the authorship of the biblical books must be confined to the two cases of the Hexateuch and the Gospel of John. Some of the more doubtful writings, like Daniel and Second Peter, and Jude, will be referred to when the question of the origin and growth of the biblical canon is raised. The two cases which have already been discussed will suffice, however, to show in general what are the relations in which the results of modern historical criticism of the authorship of the biblical books stand to the doctrine of sacred Scripture. These relations are certainly intimate, and, in some cases, perhaps controlling. But of most of the biblical books it may be said that it makes no difference to whom their authorship is due. Of many of them we do not know, and never shall know, the authors. Each tradition, which attaches a particular name to a particular writing, must be fully tested by the recognized canons of historical study; each must be taken for what it is worth when tested in this way. The result of the process of testing, in the case of the Old Testament, is by no means confirmatory, in most instances, of the ancient tradition.

We shall have to admit, indeed, that the standing of some books in both the Old and the New Testaments is relatively insecure. But this is precisely what the early Church very well knew and freely admitted. And if we can trust divine Providence to give us the Canon of

Scripture as a whole, by inspiration of the body of believers, we can surely trust the same Providence not to mislead us into dangerous error when, in the name of modern criticism, we discover that the early Church distinguished between books of the first and books of the second rank, between books which might be read with a certain spiritual profit and books on the doctrine of which the Church grounds its doctrinal faith.

The results of the modern critical study of the Bible with respect to the authorship, date, and manner of composition of its separate books, re-enforce some of the lessons to which our attention has already been repeatedly called. In forming a view of the nature of biblical inspiration, the distinction between books which are by single authors and books of a composite origin, indicating a literary growth, is by no means unimportant. To regard a work like the Hexateuch as all alike the result of infallible divine dictation or of verbal suggestion, requires a series of assumptions very different from anything we can learn concerning inspiration and revelation from the biblical writers themselves. The Hexateuch certainly can only be considered as a sort of *inspired growth*,—a collection of legal and historical documents originated, gathered, and welded together under the impulse of those theocratic and other religious ideas which the Holy Ghost planted and kept alive in the nation of Israel. But the inspiration of the Gospel of John is the fruit of the indwelling of the same divine Spirit in the mind of one who had seen, understood, and loved Jesus pre-eminently,—the Spirit unfolding continually more and more of the hidden meaning of

that unique personality, and setting imagination and feeling aglow in the flames of purifying love.

Sacred Scripture, as judged by the source and manner of its production, contains various portions that differ widely as to their value both for founding the doctrine and guiding the practice of the Christian Church. A spirit of revelation moving in history with varying degrees of illumining and purifying, as well as working and dwelling in the mind of chosen disciples, is the source of the Bible's inspiration. Some portions of it are the resultants, as it were, of the spiritual impulses and ideas of the entire pious community; others are due to the outpouring of the Spirit in the choicest, most signally blessed, and highly spiritual of the individuals comprising the community. The Hexateuch is inspired; the Gospel of John likewise. But God has spoken in divers manners at different times.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE.

The Bible is literature,—this is a claim which has given much of its impulse and guidance to the researches of modern biblical study. From it the inference is immediately made, that the writings which compose the Bible should be subjected to all the rules of literary criticism, should be treated as literature in determining their value, their origin, their meaning, and their use. Now, the Bible is, indeed, literature, and no intelligent student of its history can fail to see that the acceptance of this view has greatly quickened and improved biblical studies. But because the Bible is literature, it by no means follows that it is precisely like any other existing literature, or even that it is not unlike all other literature in many important respects. Indeed, one of the first conclusions to be drawn from the statement is that, as literature, the Bible is always to be considered with an intelligent and sympathetic appreciation of its ruling ideas.

To understand and interpret any great literary product to the best advantage, some sort of special preparation is invariably required; and the nature of the preparation is, to a certain extent, dependent upon the nature of the literary product. In addition to that distinctively linguistic and historical equipment which the highest knowledge of the Old and New Testaments requires,

there is also an imperative demand made upon the moral and religious nature of the student of these writings. The writings themselves are obviously shaped by certain moral and religious ideas. Although they are many in number, and have arisen at many widely-separated times, they have a certain unity besides the physical unity given to them by being published together under *one* cover, and read by millions as though they were indeed *one* book. This other unity is a unity in the source, character, and development of these moral and religious ideas. Now, to say that no other collection of ancient or modern literary works has any such unity, is but to state a remarkable fact in literature. This fact renders it impossible not to regard the Bible as, in some respects, a peculiar species of literature.

The truth just stated will appear all the more clearly after the brief examination which we propose to make of the language and style of the biblical books.* The study of the language and style of the biblical books is necessary to appreciate the "form" taken by sacred Scripture. Now it may be said with much obvious truthfulness that, if revelation furnishes to men certain portions of the material found in the Bible, inspiration must make itself manifest in the form in which this material is communicated. To illustrate: Some one wiser than myself may make known to me some substantial moral and religious truth which I should otherwise never know; this truth, barely as such, may be recorded in memory, or in some external manner, and I may state it afterward in an accurate way without any

* D. S. S., i., p. 581 f.

inner movement of spirit corresponding to the truth. But if I thus state what has been revealed to me, the form I give to it will not fail to show that I am declaring the truth without any appropriate spiritual stir or movement accompanying the declaration. If, however, the truth *inspires* me as I communicate it, the effect of the inspiration will surely be felt in the form which I give to the truth.

We look, then, to the form which the Bible gives to its truth for proof of the "inspiration" of its authors, as distinguished from proof that any of this truth has come to them, or to their colleagues or predecessors, by "revelation" from God. The same Holy Spirit, who by revelation gave to the world the content of revealed truth in the Bible, gave it in the form which shows the inspiration of those through whom it was given. But how different this is from any infallible divine dictation of words, a study of the form—that is, of the language and style—of the biblical books clearly shows.

A study of the Bible as literature convinces the careful and appreciative student of two cardinal facts. The biblical Hebrew and the Greek of the New Testament are somewhat peculiar forms of language; they have been influenced and moulded by those moral and religious ideas and spiritual impulses which wrought in the community of pious souls who made use of them as forms of language. Moreover, the style of both main parts of the Bible regarded as wholes, and of each book in particular (any possible exceptions being for the present disregarded), shows the effect of revelation and

inspiration in the mind of the authors. This effect differs greatly in character and degree; in some instances it may not be appreciable at all. But, as a rule from which there are few exceptions, the Bible is not written as other books of the same age, or of the most nearly contemporaneous ages, are written. As the observing reader can scarcely fail to notice, it has a *style* of its own.

In the effort to estimate the literary peculiarities of the Old Testament, however, we are met by a difficulty which arises from our having almost no other contemporaneous specimens of literature in the same language. Indeed, it has been held by some critics that the framers of the Old-Testament Canon gathered and regarded as sacred everything which remained of the ancient national literature. The references to other writings, that are met with in those writings which have been preserved, show us that there once existed a considerable literature in the ancient Hebrew language which has not been preserved. Much of this literature was what we should now call "secular" as distinguished from the "sacred" literature of the Hebrew Scriptures.

It is doubtful, however, whether the pious Jews of about Ezra's time, to whose work the gathering and revision of the books in the Old Testament is due, would have made the same distinction between secular and sacred literature. For they did receive into the collection of sacred writings, although only to an inferior rank, certain productions which are no more religious in character than were, in all probability, most

of the lost writings. For example, the Song of Solomon, Proverbs, Esther, and parts of Ecclesiastes, are no less *secular,* in our sense of the term, than were many of the three thousand parables and proverbs, and the one thousand and five lyric songs, attributed to Solomon by the writer of First Kings (iv. 29 f.). Certain lost botanical and zoölogical works are also referred to in the Old Testament. Moreover, some fragments actually found in existing biblical books appear to have had their origin outside of the circle of literary products which the Spirit of revelation and inspiration chiefly moulded. Such are the ancient (and somewhat savage) Song of Lamech, the enumeration of the sons of Japheth, the snatches of popular ditties upon the taking of Heshbon, the ancient Song of the Well,* etc. Fables about plants and trees, only a few of which are found in the Bible, are mentioned as common enough among the Hebrews.

The literature of the Old Testament is *theocratic* literature; it is, as a rule, written from the point of view from which Jehovah was regarded as standing in particular relations to Israel,—they pledged to serve Him according to the Mosaic law and He pledged to be their King and Redeemer. But under the influence of the theocratic idea, especially after the Exile, everything done and written in the history of the nation by its ancient prophets, lawgivers, and psalmists, was rendered sacred to the pious remnant of Israel. Still—as the history of the Canon of the Old Testament abundantly shows—the men who collected this literature did not

* D S. S., i., p. 589 f.

themselves regard it as all alike the work of revelation and inspiration; nor do the principles which guided them in making the selection at all warrant the bibliolatry which afterward extended itself even over books like the Song of Solomon and the history of Esther.

Our knowledge of ancient Hebrew as a language is, of necessity, derived almost entirely from a study of the Old Testament. We do not know when and where this language originated. But a comparison of Hebrew with the Aramaic and Arabic shows that it belongs, with them, to that one of the three great groups of languages which have, for about a century, been known as "Semitic." The Canaanites, on the invasion of the Hebrews, spoke a language analogous to that of their invaders. Indeed, there are some fragments in the Old Testament which seem to have been inserted from the archives of the neighboring peoples,—such as, perhaps, the genealogy of the Edomites (Gen. xxxvi.).

The origin of written characters among the Hebrews is involved in the same obscurity which envelops the origin of the language. The most ancient centre of the use of the Hebrew alphabet was in Babylon or in Egypt; but in which one of these two cannot be affirmed confidently. What remains of the very oldest literature of the nation shows no essential difference of language when compared with the literature that grew up about the time of the Exile. The art of writing was a growth of centuries; it must have been possessed by certain persons among the Israelites even before the sojourn of the people in Egypt. The ancient written Hebrew stands, therefore, in the same

relation to the languages of the Semitic race as that in which the Sanscrit stands to those of the Indo-European race. It is "the purest and most complete type of the family, and the depository of its historic, linguistic, and religious secrets."

Accordingly, it is impossible to show the effect of revelation and inspiration upon the biblical language by direct comparison of the biblical literature with other contemporaneous literature. We know little or nothing directly of Hebrew except as the Old-Testament language. Certain valuable facts are brought to light, however, by comparing the different books of the Old Testament with one another. Such a comparison shows the existence of Chaldaic passages in some of the later writings,—as, for example, in Daniel (ii. 4 to vii. 28), Ezra (iv. 8 to vi. 18), and Jeremiah (x. 11). The absence of all Greek words, except in the Chaldaic passages of Daniel and Ezra, shows how far aloof from Greek culture stood the authors of the Old-Testament books. Certain Indian, Egyptian, and Persian words,* however, show a limited intercourse with these nations. Comparison of the two also shows how much superior in clearness, simplicity, purity, and grandeur of language, the writings of the golden age of sacred Hebrew literature are to the later writings in the age of scribes and ritualists.

The influence of religious ideas and feelings upon the ancient Hebrew language is shown by its exclusiveness. In respect to such religious influence the Semitic peoples form a class by themselves. But the Hebrews

* D. S. S., i., p. 588.

were especially exclusive. The conceptions and terms which are found in the speculative pantheism of India, or in the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome, are unknown to the biblical language. "The word goddess," says an eminent Semitic scholar, "would be in Hebrew the most horrible barbarism." This sacred national literature can, of course, contain no poems which recite the genealogies of the gods, or epics telling of their wars. Scarcely any scientific and philosophical terms occur in biblical Hebrew. Certain styles of expression are, for similar reasons, rarely or never found in it. Punning, sarcasm, and various forms of wit frequently appear; but it is only in the narrative of the rude and sometimes ludicrous exploits of Samson that instances of humor are found. The language of discussion and argument is seldom used. It is probably only in the Song of Solomon and in Job that dramatic elements can be detected to any extent.

The biblical Hebrew has a wonderful quality of fixedness or immobility.* This quality is indeed marked in all the Semitic group of languages. They all have comparatively little flexibility and power of growth. This quality of fixedness is, in part, dependent upon the strength of the consonants, and upon the persistency with which given sounds, with their meanings, are connected with a fixed number of invariable characters. It is also due to the type of mind, and habits of life, belonging to the people using those languages. Closely connected with this quality is the remarkable unity and uniqueness of the biblical Hebrew. From

* D. S. S., i., p. 591 f.

the time of Moses to the time of the Exile, the only development which the language underwent concerned peculiarities of expression. The Exile itself had comparatively little effect upon this language. The aristocracy of the nation, who took the national archives with them and dwelt among strangers in Babylon, were really less Aramaized in language, as well as in views and customs, than the lower orders of the people who remained at home to be corrupted by Syrian influences.

The simplicity of the biblical Hebrew is wonderful. This trait is native with all the Semitic languages; but in the biblical Hebrew, it is also largely the result of the simplicity of the biblical ideas. Only a few ideas are dwelt upon in the Old-Testament writings, and these considered from only a few of the most direct points of view. There is little calm reflection, or research into causes, or deliberate process of reasoning, in the Hebrew classics. The sentences are never woven together into those subtle and complicated relations which characterize the ancient Greek, or the modern German or English. Subject and predicate are set down together and their relation left largely undefined; the sentences are strung loosely together with a connective "and" or "but." There are few particles; there is no neuter gender; the mood of the verb is not characterized precisely; there is no nice distinction of tenses. One cannot *interpret* the Old-Testament language with great precision; its few large conceptions can be caught and felt, but its details of truth cannot be defined and systematized. To derive from it an elaborate system of dogmatic theology—to find there the distinc-

tions of the Trinity, the true theory of human psychology, the nicely-adjusted framework of ethical ideas and general rules for conduct—is to presume improperly upon its childlikeness. It is the language for prophecy and a certain kind of poetry; but it is a language in which one cannot express any form of truth with such accuracy and definiteness of detail as *science*, strictly speaking, requires.

This language is also sensuous and passionate. The verb, and the elements of the sentence derived from the verb, or connected with it, predominate in such a way as to give great lifelikeness to the sentence itself. Anger, for example, is depicted by its physical accompaniments, by the hard breathing, by the heat, by the tumult of boiling, by the noise of breaking, by trembling, etc. The idea of "the true" is taken from solidity or stability; the idea of "the beautiful" from light. The very substance of a thing is its "bone." All through its literature the Hebrew language continues to remark that a man opens his mouth when he speaks, and that, when he is angry, his countenance falls.

Little regard for "style," in the ordinary literary acceptation of the term, is shown by the writers of the Old Testament. Their language is everywhere marked by an absence of grammatical and linguistic culture. The reader of these writings must not be put out or thrown off by such trifles as changes of gender, or unfinished, suspended, and inconsequential phrases. Modern scholarship finds it hard to make "rules" for the Hebrew; the Hebrew grammars have either to leave the student

to find out all the details of construction for himself or else burden themselves with a prolix statement of facts. To read the biblical Hebrew intelligently one must not question and argue; one must rather live over again the passionate, compressed, abrupt, and unreflecting mental experience of the authors themselves.

The number of words in this literature is small compared with the number used in our modern literature of all the different kinds.* The Hebrew language is, however, sufficiently rich in those images and conceptions which have to do with the simpler matters of the religious and practical life. It is miserably poor in terms for abstract conceptions and definite grammatical relations. It has no scientific, philosophical, or æsthetic nomenclature. For the principal matters with which it deals it has often a considerable number of different names; but it is generally unsafe to argue from a difference in names to a fixed distinction in ideas, or in the aspects of the subject to which they are attributed. One may appreciate this fact on reading the one-hundred-and-nineteenth Psalm, with its 176 verses and great diversity of terms for the one "law." Fourteen synonyms have been counted in Hebrew for the idea of trust in God, nine for the pardon of sin, twenty-five for the keeping of the Torah. Yet no elaborate doctrine of the nature of faith, or of the grounds of the divine forgiveness, or of the office of obedience in securing salvation, can be derived from this variety.

Besides prose and poetry, the Old-Testament literature has a third class in which prosaic, poetical, and

*D. S. S., i., p. 595 f.

semi-poetical elements are all combined. The influence of revelation and inspiration is little, if at all, apparent in the case of the prose language of the Hebrew Scriptures. During the golden age of the language, the Hebrew style of writing prose was not essentially different from the popular manner of speaking. But it is in its poetry, and in its prophecy so far as this is wholly or partially poetical, that the divine influence is most clearly manifest. A brief notice of the characteristics of Hebrew poetry is therefore necessary in this place.

There is little variety of forms in the poetry of the Old Testament; it is usually lyric.* The lyric sometimes approaches the epic; or—as it has been said by one scholar—contains the "stuff" and germ of epic. This is true of the Song of Moses (Ex. xv.) and of the Song of Deborah (Judg. v.). It has already been said that only a few compositions approaching the character of dramatic literature occur in the Old Testament. The so-called "gnomic" poetry of the Hebrews belongs to the later age of their literature. But various forms of the lyric are found in the sacred Hebrew writings. Such are snatches of old songs embedded in the narrative, hymns of thanksgiving and praises or of contrition and mourning, etc. Songs in lamentation for the dead and wedding-songs appear to have been abundant. Of the latter, one is preserved in the Psalter (xlv.). There were also songs for the temple-service, and special songs for celebrating a victory, or for the birthday of a king, or for special offerings. Specimens of these

*D. S. S., i., p. 597f.

different kinds of lyric poetry are retained in the *sacred* literature because, as a rule, they share in the predominating character of all such poetical literature among the Hebrews,—it was strongly theocratic. Most of these lyrics are free and unpremeditated outbursts of the moral and religious thoughts and feelings of the human soul, under a variety of circumstances, but always with the conviction that Jehovah is interested in the matter about which the song is sung.

The figures of speech which occur in the writings of the Old Testament, especially in such as have a poetic character, serve to exhibit both the native quality of the language and mental life of the people, and also the modifying influence of revelation and inspiration. The figures of speech in the sacred literature, as is the case necessarily in all literature, are derived from experience. The titles under which God is known and worshipped illustrate this truth. "In the tent of the shepherd," said an appreciative student of these writings, "God is a shepherd." Among those peoples where the family life is greatly prized, He is known as Father. And so all mankind will speak of the Infinite One in the language of the twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd," and pray to Him in the words of Jesus, "Our Father, who art in heaven."

But the Hebrew prophet or poet also represents the Almighty as like to a man in other respects. God is a husbandman going through the various processes of a husbandman's life. He threshes the mountains, and reduces the hills to chaff; He scatters the enemies of Israel with a winnowing fan or beats them with a flail, or rides

over and crushes them with a corn-drag or a threshing wain. More terrible still, He treads them under foot; and then He appears stained with their blood as one who has trodden the bright-red juice from the grapes in the wine vat. Many of these figures of speech reveal the relatively low conception of God, His motives and methods, which—as Christ and the apostles teach us—characterizes the older and temporary dispensation. Others of them are quite too coarse, as judged by the standard of modern refinement, to be employed longer for the free and public communication of moral and religious ideas. But most of this inaptness is explicable upon the general principle that the divine discipline and self-revelation were progressive and historical. God stooped to lift up the people, taking them in His arms to raise them from the level at which He found them.

With reference to matters of which polite literature hesitates to treat in these modern times, the license of certain biblical books is one of metaphors rather than of morality. This is true, for the most part, of Solomon's Song; although it cannot be denied that a few passages occur in this writing which approach close to, if they do not transgress, those limits of purity of speech and imagination which are fixed for every age. This fact, in part, explains why the book found such difficulty in obtaining for itself a place in the Old-Testament canon.

Of that sublime and impressive imagery to express the nature and deeds of Jehovah, in which the Hebrew literature abounds, it is scarcely necessary to speak. Especially quickening and penetrating is the view that the Hebrew writers take of the relations which God

sustains to nature and to the soul of man. The thunder is Jehovah's voice; the light is His garment; the winds are His messengers; heaven is His tent, palace, or temple; and all events and things are the product of His "word." By *words* as well as natural signs, God communicates with man. The Old-Testament personification of the divine "word," at first a poetic and prophetic figure of speech, has entered as a vitalizing thought into all Christian doctrine regarding the very being of God. Indeed, all our Christian language, and much of the sublimest modern poetry, represents similar moral and religious conceptions by repeating the ancient figures of speech.

The chief technical characteristic of the poetic structure of the sacred Hebrew poetic compositions is known as "parallelism."* The rapid accumulation of thought and feeling, as it were, results in the repetition of short sentences which are disposed in distichs. It has been observed that the statements of these poems are like what Sirach says of the works of God,—"two and two, one against the other." We find in the Hebrew poetical writings none of the beauty and grace of diction and versification which the other best ancient and modern literature shows. Indeed, they are marred and spoiled by any attempt to smooth them down or to put them into rhyme. The straightforward unpoetized translation of the Hebrew words is the most truly poetical way of rendering these peculiarities appreciable. To read and feel the beauty, the spirit of the reader must follow close after the spirit of the writer;—and, fortun-

* D. S. S., i., p. 600 f.

ately, there is rarely anything so profound or obscure in thought that this cannot easily be done. Thus, in the words of a Psalm can one let his soul spring forward suddenly a little way and as suddenly check itself, rise here and fall there, utter its sorrows in short-lived sobbing, or its joys in brief outbursts of exultation. But this requires the reader to be animated by the same ethical and spiritual impulse as that felt by the writer. On the other hand, the spiritual effect of the writer's words is thus to animate and inspire the reader.

The language of Hebrew prophecy—as has already been said—lies between the language of poetry and that of prose. Hymns and odes appear in the midst of different prophetic compositions. This does not appear strange when we recall the facts that music was used by the earlier prophets to stir up inspiration, and that the movements of the soul in poetry and prophecy are so extremely similar. There are not wanting prophecies that are themselves songs (Deut. xxxiii.; 2 Sam. xxiii.; Num. xxiv.). When the spirit of the prophet is exalted by inspiration, he naturally rises also to the higher form of poetic or semi-poetic speech; but he descends to prose immediately in making his announcements of fact. Various kinds of parallelism appear in the prophetic writings; more doubtful instances of strophe of various kinds have also been pointed out.

In general it may be said that whatever the soul apprehends most vividly and feels most strongly is apt to assume for its expression a poetical form. It was the great theocratic ideas and feelings which most occupied the minds and swayed the hearts of the chief producers

of the ancient sacred Hebrew literature. The Old-Testament form of impassioned, figurative expression is, therefore, pre-eminently ethical and religious; it shows throughout the influence of ideas communicated in the divine process of self-revelation to inspired souls.

While it is true that the general characteristics of the Hebrew poetic and prophetic literature are such as have been described above, it is also true that very great differences and inequalities become apparent when we compare the works of different writers and different epochs. Hebrew sacred literature has its chief works, its golden age, its flood-tide of glory. It grew, in accordance largely with the kinds and stages of moral and religious impulse which the nation of Israel received, to a full bloom; it then underwent a process of deterioration ending in decay. In general, the inferiority, both literary and also moral and religious, of the latest compositions of the Hebrew Scriptures cannot be denied. Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jonah, Chronicles, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Daniel, Ecclesiastes, and the post-Exilian Psalms, are in many respects not of the same high order with the earlier works.* The Spirit now no longer moves in the nation to produce its theocratic literature as it moved in the former days. In the chapter in which the history of the time following upon the formation of the canon was sketched (chap. i., p. 20 f.) it was made apparent that the Jews themselves recognized this fact. And the relatively low rank which the framers of the Old-Testament canon gave to the later writings, even

* D. S. S., i., p. 604 f.

when they admitted them to the canon at all, is testimony to the same fact.

The impulse which the deliverance from Egypt gave to the national literature of Israel has been compared to that received by the Greek literature from the defeat of the invading Persians. Then the "law of the Lord" began to be recognized as fitted to give a pattern and rule to the national life and national development. The influence of this law upon the poetic and prophetic literature was by no means small in any subsequent period of the history of Israel. With the beginning of the prophets who *wrote* their prophecies—that is, just before and after 800 B.C.—there begins a new epoch in Hebrew literature; the more ancient impersonal writings of a legal and historical character are replaced by the personal authorship of the inspired messenger of Jehovah. For this reason considerations of "style," in the more definite meaning of the word, enter more largely into our estimate of the origin and nature of the literary products belonging to this class.

As Jerome long ago noticed, each of the prophets has his peculiar style. The work of Isaiah presents the most finished literary style attained by the ancient Hebrew; this is true as respects "taste, proportion, and perfection of form." The style of this prophet is elegant, majestic, elevated, versatile, and yet possessed of a dignified simplicity. Amos came from the ranks of the people; he employs such Aramaic forms as belonged to the speech of common life in distinction from the language of books. His figures of speech are rustic, as was natural to a shepherd and gardener. Hosea and Micah are forci

ole and concise, but the former is obscure on account of his brevity, and his tone is local. Nahum is bold, ardent, sublime. The "Pindaric ode" of Habakkuk (chap. iii.) is unrivalled in majesty of thought and diction. Objections to Jeremiah for his rusticity and grammatical ignorance are very ancient; and, indeed, he has neither the dignity of movement nor purity of diction which belongs to the earlier prophets. Neither he nor Zephaniah has the literary or the moral loftiness of the writers mentioned above. Ezekiel has justly and uniformly been regarded as inferior to all the other prophets from a literary point of view. Neither his truth nor the language in which he expresses himself has much originality; both are borrowed largely from earlier writers. "His imagery," says Lowth, "is crowded, magnificent, terrific, sometimes almost to disgust; his language is pompous, solemn, austere, rough." These peculiarities of style are in part to be explained by certain changes which the language was undergoing; but they are chiefly due to the inferior character of the personality of this prophet and of the spiritual influences under which he wrote.

On passing from the study of the Old Testament as literature to the study of the New Testament in the same way, we become aware of an enlarged opportunity for making a comparative estimate of the language in which the books are written, and so of arriving at certain definite results. The Greek of the New Testament can be contrasted with the classic Greek and also with the later literary Greek, the so-called "*koinē*." To some extent it can also be compared with that form of

the later Greek which prevailed in common speech. Moreover, the history of those changes and growths of ideas and words which are embodied in the Christian Scriptures can be traced in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), in the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament, and in certain other Jewish writings of a religious and philosophical sort. Thus the influence of Christian ideas and spiritual impulses upon the language of the New Testament can be shown with a comparatively great clearness and minuteness. In order to reach such a result it is necessary briefly, at least, to consider three things: (1) the nature of the *koinē*, or later literary Greek, which acted as a kind of linguistic solvent for the other elements of the New-Testament language; (2) the terms and phrases which had already resulted from the attempts of the Jews to set forth the Old-Testament religion in a Greek dress; (3) the modifications of the Greek which are the more direct result of the influence of Christian ideas and feelings.

Three most ancient forms of the Greek language—the Æolic, the Doric, and the Ionic dialects—are made known to us by its literature. The Ionic was the favorite form for epic poetry; the Doric, for lyric in the war-songs, religious hymns, and the choruses; the Æolic, for the peculiar kind of lyric in which Alcæus and Sappho sung. But the Attic, which originated chiefly from the Ionic, became afterward the prevalent language of literature after Athens had taken its place as the great literary centre of the Greek world. It was in drama, the oration, history, and philosophy that the

Attic writers excelled. The Macedonian conquest, which broke down almost all the ancient barriers and distinctions, mixed together and corrupted all these dialects, so that the organic and living development of genuine Greek as a language almost ceased soon after the time of Alexander. A certain kind of Greek, however, spread itself over the whole of the ancient civilized world, and even among the barbarians. In Athens the language remained for a time relatively pure; but the Attic, which was spoken in the Macedonian court and by the Macedonian soldiery, extended, not only over all the lands inhabited by the ancient Greek race, but also into Syria and Egypt. Merchants, soldiers, strolling players, and escaped or freed slaves, carried this debased Greek with them. Not only were the different ancient dialects mixed together and with foreign languages, but rural and uncouth forms of speech were mingled with those peculiar to the centres of trade.*

While the spoken Greek was undergoing these various stages of corruption in the intercourse of the motley crowds that employed it, the language, considered as a literary language, was also undergoing changes closely related to those described above. Some of the later writers, even when not living at Athens, made strenuous efforts to write in Greek as nearly pure and classical as possible. Among the Jews, Philo and Josephus furnish instances of a style approximating *literary* Greek. But scholars have no difficulty in

*D. S. S., i., p. 609 f.

recognizing marked differences between this later literary language and the pure classic form of Greek.

It was at one time held by certain dogmatists to be blasphemous to assert that the New-Testament Greek is not faultlessly correct, when judged by the ancient classic models. But it is now known that the language of the inspired teachers of Christianity is based upon this later and inferior Greek, and that the Spirit who inspired them took no pains to work the perpetual miracle necessary to guard them against all mistakes in etymology and syntax. The New-Testament language fundamentally considered is neither pure and classic Greek nor the wretched jargon which resulted from the debasement of classic Greek and its mixture with barbaric tongues. It is about such Greek as was spoken by the Jews in their daily intercourse at the centres of civilization. Probably the New-Testament diction is itself the best example extant of the spoken *koinē*.

Many peculiarities of the New-Testament manuscripts are explained by the essential nature of the language in which they were written. Among these is the great uncertainty of the spelling which they share in common with all the written and spoken *koinē*. The spelling of the original manuscripts from the hands of the authors was probably not uniform. A frequent confusion of short and long vowels and of single vowels and diphthongs appears. Sometimes we have a failure to observe an augment, sometimes a false augment, sometimes a repetition of the augment. Confusions of gender and changes in the inflection of nouns and verbs also occur. Words from different dialects have become

absorbed into the common speech. New significations of old words are met with and also newly-compounded words. Some words which would have been considered vulgar by the classic Greek are taken into the New-Testament language, because of the popular use they had attained; they are then employed for the expression of more elevated conceptions. For example, the word which we find in the later comedy as a low word to express the stuffing of one's self with food like a beast (to "fodder") is used by the Gospel of Matthew (v. 6) in the ideal sense of satisfying the hunger of the soul.

A kind of seething sea of language—ancient dialects, old poetic forms, newer constructions of popular, and even vulgar, speech—was waiting to be brooded over by the Spirit of God. The language for the promulgation of the ideas of Christianity must be *Greek;* for no other ancient language possessed anything like the same capacity for figurative construction, the same manifoldness, versatility, and wealth of words and ideas. But if the New Testament had been written in classic, pure, and grammatical Greek, it would have required a perpetual miracle of divine guidance and of dictation to produce it, and it would not have addressed itself to the multitudes in a language which they could understand. As a modern scholar has said: "It is the sacred prerogative of the Gospel never to be preached otherwise than in the language of humanity and to the poor." And this view of its literary characteristics does it far more real honor than did the foolish *post*-Reformation dogma which argued that no grammatical

or other linguistic blemishes can exist in the New Testament, because it is all virtually written by the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost cannot write bad Greek!

In the second place, it must be remembered that the impress of revelation and inspiration had already made itself strongly felt upon that form of Greek which the New-Testament writers used; this was the case with the Septuagint translation and the Old-Testament Apocrypha. Upon the basis of the *koinē*, especially as spoken in Alexandria, a technical religious language of the Jews had already arisen. For multitudes of these people the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures was the only form of Greek literature which they knew. This translation, therefore, exercised a great influence over the form of Greek as written and spoken among the Jews, both of Judæa and of the dispersion. Now, the language of the Septuagint is of a peculiar kind; it is Greek of about the grade of purity of that *spoken* at Alexandria,—poor as compared with the written Greek of Philo and Josephus, but free from the worst of the jargon that must have prevailed in the speech of the surrounding regions.

What are known as "Hebraisms," in the widest sense of the word, abound in the Septuagint. These are of different orders. Sometimes a Hebrew-Aramaic word is simply carried over into Greek letters; sometimes the secondary meaning of a Hebrew word is given to a Greek word which corresponds to the Hebrew word only in respect to the primary meaning; sometimes derivative words are formed, after the analogy of the Greek vernacular, to fit Hebrew conceptions; some-

times peculiarly Hebrew figures of speech are carried over into the Greek, when unknown to the classic form of the latter language; sometimes phrases quite foreign to the Greek are constructed by a verbal translation of the Hebrew vernacular. And then there is everywhere to be noticed the presence of technical religious terms and phrases.

The chief service, which the Greek of the Septuagint rendered in preparing a diction for the New Testament, took the form of certain technical Greek words and phrases that represent the ideas of Old-Testament religion. Since the ideas of Christianity are so grounded in the more ancient religion, the language of the Greek version of Old-Testament Scriptures sustains important relations to the Greek of the New Testament. Indeed, most of the words and phrases which the Christian writers use to express its technical religious facts and ideas are the gift of the Septuagint. It is nevertheless true that the spirit of Christianity has greatly changed and expanded the import of many words and phrases. Examples of this sort may be found in the phrase "kingdom of God," and in the word for "holiness." For this latter conception neither of the four words common in classic Greek is employed. But the Septuagint had already adopted another word of kindred signification (a word rarely used in the Attic Greek or the literary *koinē*), and had regularly employed it to express its religious idea of holiness. This same word the New-Testament writers use to designate their expanded conception of the same reality. In another instance, the opposition which exists between the pres-

ent fleeting and sensual order of affairs and the moral worth of the divine kingdom leads to an habitual use of the word "world" in the very opposite of its developed Greek meaning. Instead of being thought of as a divine, orderly, and beautiful whole, as the classic Greek regards it, the world is regarded by the biblical writers as debased and separated from the true divine order. The Old Testament set forth this opposition as it existed between the people of Jehovah and the Gentiles; Paul and John exhort the followers of Jesus not to love the "world."

It is scarcely possible to overestimate the new wealth of meaning which Christianity imparted to the technical religious terms of Judaism.* It has been said of Paul's use of the word "righteousness," that every Jewish reader of Paul would have been obliged to say: "This man uses our word in a different sense from ours." The Christian religion gave a new meaning to such words as "love," "faith," and "hope." The New-Testament conception of *love* as the fruit of the Spirit is a creation of Christianity. The word which its writers employ for this conception is not found in unbiblical Greek to signify a pure spiritual affection. It is rarely employed at all in the Septuagint outside of the Song of Solomon. But the Christian doctrine regards the origin of *love* as from God,—the very reverse of Aristotle's view, that Deity exists to be loved and not to love. The meaning of the word employed by the New Testament for "faith" more nearly corresponds to the classic usage. For even in classic

* D. S. S., i., p. 618 f.

Greek *faith* is persuasion based on confidence in a person or thing, rather than mere belief or knowledge. This idea, and the word for it, was a priceless gift from the classic Greek to the New-Testament writers. But only the Christian religion could evolve the full significance of that religious idea which is now attached to the word "faith." The word for "hope" was originally used of the expectation of future things, sometimes evil but usually good. In the New Testament it is always employed in a good sense, but more especially for that expectation of eternal salvation, with its joyful and firm confidence, which the Christian religion imparts to men. This expectation of future good is alone worthy of being called *hope.*

Modern linguistic researches have shown in detail the wonderful manner in which the Spirit of Christ, working in the minds of His disciples, dealt with certain words in the vocabulary of the Greek psychology. A marked example of this is shown in the fact that the highest self-conscious principle of the psychical life of man is not called "reason" by the New-Testament writers after the fashion of the Greek thought. It is rather called "spirit,"—a word which, in this meaning, is foreign to classic Greek. The divine principle of the new life of man in Christ, and the principle of God's own life, can accordingly be spoken of under this term The New-Testament phrase for the "Spirit of God" would have been unintelligible to Aristotle and Plato. Various instances might also be given where the spiritual ideas and impulses of Christianity are shown in the omission of words or meanings of words that are com-

mon in classic Greek to express certain ethical and æsthetic conceptions.

We cannot affirm confidently that the inspiration of the spirit of Christianity furnished the world with any absolutely new words or compounds of words; for we have no such acquaintance with previous and contem poraneous Greek literature as would be necessary to warrant this statement. But there are many cases where it is highly probable that the compound words which most manifestly serve as vehicles for purely Christian thought, were originated in this way. It is not easy to describe the impression which the Christian student of the Greek Testament receives as to the marvellously intense and comprehensive, formative power over its language which may be ascribed to the influence of the Holy Ghost in the minds of its writers.*

That different varieties of style exist in the writings of the New Testament is a fact which the observing reader of the English Bible can clearly enough distinguish for himself. The personal peculiarities of the authors are much more plainly marked here than in the case of the Old-Testament writings. There are two principal reasons for this fact. The Greek language is a much more flexible and subtile expression of the mind than is the Hebrew language; and Christian inspiration was far freer and less limited by conventionalities than the inspiration of the Old-Testament authors. Thus in the first three Gospels we have a narrative of Christ's life and sayings which is determined, with respect to language and style, by the characteristics of the Gospel

*D. S. S., i., p. 622.

message as it was spoken to and by Jews in their peculiar form of the *koinē*.

The personalities of John and Paul have, of course, a pre-eminent importance and value for the diction of the New Testament, and so for the expression of Christian ideas and Christian experience to the end of time. How much do all readers of the Bible speak of their own experience *after* the style of these inspired men! Nor is it difficult to point out the more marked characteristics of each of these two writers. There is a vocabulary of words in use in Christian sermons, conversation, and literature which are to be taken in the peculiar "Johannean" sense. Among such terms are the following: "word," "light," "truth," "life," "bread of life," "flesh," etc.

As for the Apostle Paul, there is scarcely any other way so effective for becoming intimately acquainted with his personality as a thorough, scholarly study of the peculiarities of his language and style. Who shall estimate at their full value the contributions not only to the religious ideas of the world, but also to its means for expressing such ideas, which have been made by this man? A whole group of words from one root (the word for "rightness"), which Paul filled with new life and import, has had an incalculable influence over the theological beliefs and speculations of the entire Christian world. What a mighty but impulsive and tempestuous nature this apostle had, and how mightily the Spirit carried him along,—at times, apparently quite regardless of precisely what he might be saying,—his use of words makes very plain. Mark his effort—sometimes

ineffective—to bring the larger members of his sentences into an organic movement and make them truly periodic! See how he rushes forward with his utterance and then takes a sudden turn, as it were, in some side direction, and slips in here and there new thoughts and interjections of questions and remarks! He is fond of starting off at a word of his own. In certain places he piles up compounds as though he could not, even in this way, find means for sufficient utterance. He rises into the language of speculation with the tentative struggle to put his formative thoughts and flowing feeling into some firm shape; and, when the building up of the immediate and pressing interests of the daily Christian life is before him, he readily falls back upon the language of experience.

This brief review of certain literary characteristics of the Bible affords an argument in favor of its general claim to be regarded as sacred Scripture. It appears that two kinds of human speech have had a providential preparation to fit them for becoming the vehicles of the ideas and spirit of revelation. One of these is a Semitic language, the Hebrew; one an Indo-European language, the Greek. Each of these has, in itself considered and apart from all influence from these religious ideas and this religious spirit, certain definite peculiarities. The ancient Hebrew was the fit medium of the Old-Testament revelation; that form of the Greek which arose on the basis of the classic language as subjected to many corrupting influences as well as also to the impress of Jewish religious ideas, was the fit vehicle for conveying the Christian revelation. The work of the Divine Spirit

in providentially selecting and shaping these languages to the self-revelation of God as the Redeemer of men in Christ Jesus is manifested in history to the devout student of this subject. Moreover, much of the linguistic form of the Bible itself shows a direct and powerful influence from the ideas of this divine self-revelation. The ideas have themselves been given to men in the process of revelation; they are ideas peculiar to biblical religion; they have been lodged in language which they have largely moulded to themselves.

Still further, the individual writers of this sacred literature not infrequently show in their language and literary style, the influence of the new ideas which they themselves are receiving by revelation, and of the new impulses of the Spirit which are moving in their souls. There are, however, some entire books, and many shorter passages of the biblical writings, for which no proofs of such influence of inspiration upon the language can be claimed. This is especially true of the historical writings of the Old Testament. Most of the sacred writers also appear to act under the influence of these inspiring ideas so far as their language and style are concerned, only in an indirect way; that is to say, they share in the general inheritance of a language and style prepared by divine spiritual influences which all the pious of the nation possess.

But in the case of other writers, and in the case of some writers very frequently, strong and impressive evidence appears of that special spiritual movement needed to lift the writer into the creative sphere. Then new meanings to old words, and new verbal compounds

and phrases constructed in such a way as to enrich the means of religious expression for all time, arise as the more immediate result of inspiration. Nor would we deny, but rather claim and defend, the possibility of a "suggestion of words" by the Holy Ghost. For the words of a writer under a strong spiritual impulse are born of that impulse as truly as they are the product of his own previous education and of the culture of the race to which he belongs. And the source of such an impulse is fitly regarded as the source also of the language in which the impulse finds its expression.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CANON AND THE TEXT.

Of all the subordinate questions connected with the main inquiry, What is the Bible? no others are so important as those that concern the formation of the Canon. Little information or reflection is necessary to confirm this remark. For the Bible, although we are wont to regard it as one book, is in reality a collection of writings of a widely diverse origin, with very different characteristics and degrees of value. What persons or powers regulated the limits fixed to this collection, and upon what principles of selection was the collection made? The separate writings, considered by themselves and apart from the relations which they sustain to each other within the canon of sacred Scripture, do not constitute the Bible at all. The existence of a larger or smaller number of compositions by inspired persons does not, of itself, explain the existence of the Bible. For it is not one writing, but many,—*a collection of writings.* As a collection it can claim no infallibility or authority which is not dependent upon the authority by which the collection came to be made. The very term "a canon of sacred Scripture" implies that some selection has been made upon grounds of fitness, and that certain writings are fit and others not fit to enter into the collection. The question therefore

arises as to what authority shall determine this fitness. In order to have an infallible Bible, this authority must be infallible.

There is no escape from the argument which connects the inspiration of the Church with the inspiration of the Bible. If the Church was not inspired in the making and limiting of the collection of sacred writings, then we have no sufficient guarantee for the inspiration of the collection. Indeed, the fallacy of the position assumed by that form of dogmatism which we have characterized as *post*-Reformation is most patent and distressing. After denying the infallibility of the inspiration of the Church catholic, even when acting in that organic way which was believed to have the promise of divine guidance, these dogmatists had recourse to the theory of an infallible Bible. This infallibility of the Bible they understood very differently from the earlier and greater theologians of the Reformation. It seemed to them insufficient that the Word of God—meaning the truth of the Gospel as brought to men by Christ and His apostles—should be regarded as the sure and unfailing type and test of right Christian doctrine and practice. The *post*-Reformation theory demanded an infallibility of the letter of the entire canon throughout. Not a wrong jot or tittle, not a single error in history, geography, date, genealogy, or even grammar and spelling, was to be admitted within the awful precincts of words dictated by the Holy Ghost.

But who originally detected the qualities of infallible inspiration in the particular circle of religious writings which constitutes the Bible, so that Esther

and not First Maccabees, the Epistle of Jude and not the Epistle of Clement, were received within this circle? The only possible answer to such a question is the following: this work was accomplished by the Church of God, by the Jewish Church under the old dispensation and the Christian Church under the new, through the providential guidance and direction of the Divine Spirit. But if all the writings within the Bible, and no others, are regarded as infallibly inspired, what escape is there from the conclusion that the authority which constituted the Bible is itself infallibly inspired? Now, this is to say that the Church is infallibly inspired. In this way did the *post*-Reformation theory of sacred Scripture lead men into the same error which it undertook to supplant.

No one, therefore, can intelligently believe in the inspiration of the Bible who does not also believe in the inspiration of the Church. In fact, it is the inspiration of the Church which tests and guarantees the inspiration of the Bible. It is vain to attempt to deny this. The plain historical fact remains unshaken. That collection of sacred writings which we call the Bible came into existence, as a whole composed of many parts, in no other way than through the action of the living Church of God, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

The question of the biblical canon is for us, undoubtedly, a question of historical criticism. To be sure, we can never absolutely deny the right of the Christian Church, on new evidence or on a better understanding of old evidence, to revise the canon. Nevertheless, the primary inquiries are historical and

critical. Such of them as we shall now consider may be put in the following form: What was originally meant by a "Canon of sacred Scriptures," and what are we to understand by the term? How did the Church come to form the canon in the shape in which it is now customarily regarded as being fixed and closed? What light do the answers to the preceding two questions throw upon our main inquiry as to the origin and nature of the Bible?

The question, what *was* meant by a "Canon of sacred Scripture," is, of course, an historical question. It is impossible to answer it in any other way than by an examination of history. But even in this way its answer is not easy. It is certain, however, that neither the Jewish nor the Christian Church ever intended to set apart a definite circle of writings as totally unlike all others, with respect to their relation to the divine work of revelation or inspiration. Nor did they intend to teach, by "canonizing" certain books, that these books were all of like inspiration, authority, or value. In other words, whatever conception of a "Canon" may have been reached by the early Church, in the midst of whose life and experience the accepted canon received its shaping, this conception was very different from that prevalent among uninformed Christians in the present day.

The original and literal meaning of the word "Canon" is, that which, being itself straight, serves to measure or keep straight something else. From this meaning it is but an easy and natural step to the metaphorical meaning,—that which furnishes a norm, rule,

or model of proportion or excellence.* The words "canonized" and "canonical," as applied to the Scriptures, are repeatedly found in the Latin translation of the writings of Origen. Similar terms, such as "the Rule of the Church," the "Rule of Truth," the "Rule of Faith," occur in the works of the Church Fathers from the time of Irenæus onward, especially in their controversies with the heretics. But the earliest known use of the word "canonical," in opposition to uncanonical or apocryphal, probably occurs in the Festal Epistle of Athanasius (365 A.D.).

It is only in the fifth century that we reach the more strictly dogmatic conception of the Bible as itself constituting a measure of Christian truth; and this is in a way very different from that employed by the theory to which we have referred with disapprobation so often. For in this early usage, the words "canon," "canonical," and "canonized," as applied to Scripture, are almost always, if not quite without exception, employed in the passive meaning. That is to say, the canonical writings are not regarded as those which give the law to the teaching of the Church, but as *those which have themselves been ratified by the teaching of the Church.* "The Canon" is that collection of writings which has actually been canonized by the decision of the living and inspired body of believers.

We obtain further information regarding the early conception of the Canon by considering the term "Apocrypha," with which the canonical writings came

* D. S. S., i., p. 636 f.

to be contrasted.* This term, when applied to literary compositions, signified either those which contain something hidden and mysterious or those whose origin is itself hidden. The public use of such writings might be forbidden, either because they were not highly enough esteemed, or because their contents were regarded as too sacred on account of their esoteric character. It was the attempt to dress over the thoughts and facts of the Old Testament in the philosophy and language of Greece, which gave rise to the apocryphal literature of the Alexandrine Jews.

But our attention has already been called to the fact that the Church Fathers themselves regarded at least some of these apocryphal writings as inspired, frequently cited them as sacred Scripture, and on some occasions placed them quite on a level in this regard with certain of the Old-Testament canonical books. How indefinite for some centuries was the limit around the so-called "Canon," we shall see later on. Indeed, there was a divided tradition among the Jews themselves as to the limits of canonical Hebrew Scripture, and the Christian Church inherited this divided tradition. One canon of a stricter sort was favored by the connection of the Church with Hebrew sources and with the Palestinian Jews, another by the looser usage of the Alexandrine Jews and the common use of the Septuagint version.

Accordingly, the appeal was made to tradition when the inquiry arose as to what are the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament; but the answer given to the ap

* D. S. S., i., p. 638 f.

peal became itself a new element in the growing tradition. In the case of the New Testament also the appeal was made to the same principle of tradition. This appeal, in its earliest form, was taken to the custom of the apostolic churches; it was afterward submitted to the declarations of the bishops as possessors of the true Christian consciousness; still later it was made to the decision of councils. But the result of all these appeals did not establish, and indeed it has not to this day established, a perfect uniformity of judgment, either as to the limits of the canon as a whole, or as to what are the valid and useful distinctions to be made among the different books.

On the first of these two points (the limits of the canon) the West and the East reached somewhat divergent points of view. The West, largely through Augustine's influence, obtained a synodal recognition of all the books read publicly in the churches,—that is, of the "Canon" in the wider sense; but the East was more inclined to exclude altogether the books now called apocryphal, although Jerome and Athanasius stood on middle ground. On the second point the result of the whole appeal to tradition was to establish a distinction of classes even among the books admitted to the canon; some books were to be regarded as chief sources for establishing doctrine, others as only useful for the Christian life.

This, then, is what the Christian Church came to understand by the "Canon of sacred Scripture" (the Bible): *A collection of writings (presumably authentic and inspired) which the body of believers in past time have*

judged to be of authority in teaching Christian doctrine and useful in building up the Christian life. But that all these writings are of like authority in determining doctrine or of like usefulness in guiding the life, is precisely what the Church did *not* hold and teach.

The history of the process of the formation of the canon is a long one, and many points in it are still obscure; nor will the obscure points ever, in all probability, be cleared up. A very brief sketch of some of the principal features of this history is all that can now be attempted. It is especially true of the Old Testament that no amount of critical and historical study will ever enable the world of scholars to tell in detail how its canon came to be formed. The traditions of the Jews on this subject are made up of untrustworthy stories and myths. For example, the statement that Ezra and the men of the so-called "great synagogue" constituted the canon is an hypothesis found in a Jewish writing as late as the sixteenth century after Christ, which rests on a misunderstanding of certain earlier rabbinical writings. One of the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament (4 Ezra xiv.) tells how Ezra was so inspired that he could restore the sacred writings which had perished at the burning of the temple by the Chaldæans; the story is of interest only as a legend.

There are, however, certain scattered indications in the Old Testament itself which may be put together as an aid to some understanding of the process by which the work of collecting its writings went on. The beginning of the formation of a canon of sacred Hebrew

Scriptures seems to have been made when the record of the covenant between Jehovah and the people of Israel was preserved. As writings laid away before Jehovah we find mentioned the Book of the Covenant,* the narrative written by Joshua of the renewal of the covenant at Shechem,† and the writing by Samuel containing the fundamental law of the kingdom.‡ But we do not reach any full recognition of any writing as a canonical Scripture until the institution of Deuteronomy, according to the narrative of 2 Kings (xxii., xxiii.). This event took place in the eighteenth year of Josiah, 621 B.C. The codifying of the Law contained in this writing has fitly been called "the decisive step by which Scripture came into the place of oral tradition, and the people of the spoken word became a people of the book."

The writings of the Old Testament themselves bear witness to the fact that other Hebrew writings had been highly esteemed, and had therefore been preserved before the canonization of any of the Old-Testament books took place.§ For example, in the Pentateuch we find reference to the "Book of Origins," the "Book of the Wars of Jehovah," and the "Book of Jashar." Outside of the Pentateuch we also find notices of ancient works; such are this same Book of Jashar (see 2 Sam. i. 18), and certain works of the royal historiographers, like the Book of the History of Solomon, the Book of the Kings of Judah and of the Kings of Israel. If the question is raised, Why did the later Jews so esteem

* Deut. xxxi. 9, 26, and xvii. 18.

† Josh. xxiv. 25, 26.

‡ 1 Sam. x. 25.

§ D. S. S., i., p. 645 f.

these earlier writings? the general reply must be, that they regarded them as *theocratic* literature. It is on this ground, too, that the writings of the Old Testament, as a whole, were regarded sacred; they were the records of the messages of the Lord to, and the dealings of the Lord with, the nation Israel, under the covenant which He had made with their ancestors. But the claim to a place in this theocratic literature differed very greatly for the different writings. Indeed, it was (as we shall see) for a long time doubtful whether certain of the later writings, now found in the Hebrew Bible, could have their claim admitted at all.

The Pentateuch, as a whole, cannot be spoken of as canonized until it was made the sacred book of the nation for public religious reading by the action recorded in Nehemiah (viii.–x.). According to Ezra (vii. 6, 10 f.), it had first been brought to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, 458 B.C. Thus the writings of Mosaism became the sacred and authoritative source of the national law. It was this canonizing of the written Law which had been so many centuries in reaching the shape it then had, after the return from the Exile, that formed the nucleus for the entire "Canon of the Old-Testament Scriptures." It is for this reason that we find the entire collection of the sacred writings of Israel early called by the term, "the Law." *

Before the Exile, however, there existed a somewhat indefinite collection of prophetic writings that had precisely the same value which would have been attached to the oral utterances of any one regarded as a

* In the apocryphal writing, 4 Ezra xiv. 21. D. S. S., i., p. 645.

true prophet. But it was only after the Exile, and by a process of spreading the canonizing of the Law over the Prophets (as it were), that the more precise estimate of these writings as canonical arose. The different steps of the process cannot be accurately traced. But the activity of *canonizing* the ancient theocratic literature did not close with Ezra; on the contrary, it went on for several centuries. The first direct witness to its having already taken place is found in the later time of the Greek writings among the Jews. The decay of Hebrew, and its tendency to fall into the position of an occult sacred language, and the consequent cessation of the production of theocratic literature in that language, undoubtedly helped on this process. But the freshness and productive activity of the earlier theocratic spirit were also gone; the days of the great inspired civil and religious leaders and authors of the nation were over.

The fact that the term, "the Law and the Prophets," was regularly used to designate the entire Hebrew Bible shows how late was the canonizing of those writings (not legal or early prophetic) which are called the "Hagiographa." We have already seen that this third portion of the canon was considered by the Jews themselves far inferior, in respect to its inspiration and authority, to the other two portions. But the Psalms constituted the earliest and most firmly fixed writings of this third portion. It seems, indeed, to be indicated by 1 Chron. xvi. 36, that the Psalter, as divided into five parts, was thus early used by the people in religious worship. A canon of the Psalms may have been in existence before the canon of the Old Testament as a

whole was even begun. But the canon of the Psalms was not definitely closed until much later; it was apparently opened repeatedly, even as late as the Maccabean era to receive new psalms. Inspired hymns, that might be profitably used in the worship of Jehovah, were thus among the first and the last of the canonical theocratic literature of Israel.

The last step in completing the canon of sacred Hebrew writings consisted in selecting, from a miscellaneous group of works—poetic, prophetic, historical, didactic—certain individual compositions which are now comprised in the Old Testament. These compositions were justly considered inferior to the earlier works; yet they were thought worthy of preservation in Israel's theocratic literature. They were called "the writings"; and the very name shows how indefinite was the nature of their contents. Philo speaks of this third part of the Hebrew Bible as "Praises to God (psalms) and *other writings*." In it were included Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Ruth, which, on account of their late origin and inferior character, could not be placed with the earlier historical books among the so-called "former Prophets." For the same reason these collectors of the canon gave Daniel the position it has instead of placing it among the "Prophets" in the most special sense of the word.

There was a particularly long dispute over the canonizing of Esther, the Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. The Jewish rabbis felt objections to these writings similar to those felt by many in the present day. This dispute was not wholly settled even at the

beginning of the third century after Christ. At that time some teachers rejected Ecclesiastes as a profane writing, and some questioned its canonical position. Others wished also to exclude Esther from the canon. The influence of this decision is apparent in the Christian Church: Athanasius the Great denies the canonicity of Esther, and Melito of Sardis does not enumerate it among the books deemed canonical. One school of rabbis refused to put Solomon's Song on a level with other Scriptures; "it defileth not the hands," said they,—that is, it is not holy writing.

It is very difficult to tell why certain writings now classed among the apocryphal books of the Old Testament were not also canonized. Indeed, it is probable that no one rule governed the selection made among these later writings. Probably the existence of an original Hebrew text of any composition operated as strongly as any consideration. The Apocrypha were, for the most part, excluded from the canon by the Palestinian Jews, not because they were not deemed equally inspired with such later writings as were admitted, but because no copies of them existed in the sacred language of the genuine theocratic literature of the nation.

The "Canon of the Old Testament," therefore, was not fixed and declared at any one time or by any one man or association of men, or upon any well-defined grounds of judgment. It grew up under providential influences, which left it at the very last moment, when it came into the hands of the Christian Church, still somewhat indefinite and without exact limits. Israel had acquired

as a result of the process of divine self-revelation and inspiration which continued through the centuries of its history, a large body of theocratic literature. By the same Spirit who had given this literature the nation was led to collect and preserve a certain circle of its ancient writings. Some of the writings, especially those of the Law and of the earlier prophets, had, from the first, a relatively clear claim to a place within this circle. The reasons why other writings were admitted within it are not so clear; but it is certain that the framers of the Old-Testament Canon never intended to place the later and more doubtful writings on a par with the earlier works.

The foregoing view of the formation of the Old-Testament Canon is confirmed by the notices of the subject derived from three Jewish writers before Christ. These are Jesus Sirach, the unknown author of Second Maccabees, and Josephus.* The first of these three makes pretensions to prophetic and canonical significance for his own work; the second speaks of Nehemiah as having "founded a library and collected the writings of the kings and prophets, and those of David, and letters of kings concerning votive offerings." The phrase, "letters concerning votive offerings," seems to refer to those missives of the Persian kings, which gave permission to build the temple, as though they were sacred and canonical Scripture; that is, these letters belong to the theocratic literature of Israel.

Josephus' testimony is only valuable as that of a learned Jew of the first century after Christ; it cer

* D. S. S., i., p. 651.

tainly would not have commanded the assent of all the learned Jews of Palestine, much less of the Alexandrine teachers. He gives the number of books at twenty-two —the number of letters in the sacred Hebrew alphabet. He adopts, of course, the customary three-fold division. These are the five books of Moses, the thirteen Prophets, and the four Hagiographa. It is doubtful what writings he would include in the last four; whether he would number (1) Psalms, (2) Proverbs, (3) Solomon's Song, (4) Ecclesiastes; or, (1) Psalms, (2) Job, (3) Proverbs and Solomon's Song, (4) Ecclesiastes.

On turning from the Old Testament to the New, we are able to employ a somewhat different method of investigation for determining the nature of that historical process which resulted in forming its collection of canonical writings. In the case of the Old Testament the evidence is almost entirely derived from internal criticism; the Jewish tradition as to the formation of the Old-Testament Canon is composed of myth and legend. But in the case of the New Testament, although there is little direct evidence which reaches back into the first century, we are able to trace the larger and more distinct outlines of the path by which the Church reached in the following centuries a substantial unanimity in its decision.

It is obvious that the fixing of the New-Testament Canon did not take place through the independent criticism of individual scholars. The opinions of influential individuals like Jerome and Augustine, for example, greatly helped on the settlement of the debated questions; but these opinions themselves were often only

the results of judgments previously reached by the uncritical moral and religious instinct of the churches at large. Providence decided the matter by a verdict gradually formed under the spiritual guidance promised to the body of believers. At first the voice of this body was declared through the large central churches; afterward, what the bishops thought and said was of great account; still later, acts of council undertook to settle the matter. But after all it was generally understood that these affirmations were only of the nature of witnesses to what the Church *had already come* to hold about the canonical Christian writings—how, and on what grounds, it was neither necessary to inquire nor easy to determine.

Three tolerably well-marked steps in the historical process of forming the New-Testament Canon need to be distinguished, and three periods during which the Church was advancing by these steps. The first of these periods came to a close soon after the middle of the second century. This period was occupied in grasping the idea that Christian believers had a body of sacred writings from apostolic sources which were to be placed in some sort upon the same plane for purposes of public religious instruction with the Scriptures of the Old Testament. By the close of the period this idea was applied by common consent of the churches *to all but seven* of the New-Testament books. The question in debate during this time was not the canonicity but the genuineness of the separate writings.

The second period of the formation of the New Testament Canon extends from toward the close of the

second until toward the close of the fourth century. During this period the Church catholic was taking its position over against the various sects and heresies with which it had to contend. This made it essential that the limits of its sacred Scriptures should be more definitely fixed than they had hitherto been. The question of the canon became practically determined by receiving into it all the books of the present New Testament. Yet it was understood that the seven doubtful books were *not* received into the canon as being of the same rank with the others, and that they were *not* to be used as authoritative sources of apostolic doctrine. To this class of books holding the second rank belong Second Peter, Second and Third John, James, Jude, and, with less unanimity of testimony, Hebrews and the Apocalypse. During the third period from the close of the fourth century onward, no change in the limits of the New-Testament Canon appears; but the distinction of its books into two classes becomes, in a large degree, practically lost.

From the very nature of the case, we cannot expect to find any distinct recognition of the canonical authority of the New-Testament writings in the earliest of the three periods. The very idea of a New-Testament Canon was itself in process of formation. At first the consciousness of a vital connection with the instruction and practice of the Apostles of our Lord satisfied the churches which had listened to their preaching or that of their helpers, or which had received epistles from them. These epistles were doubtless read publicly to the Christian congregations to whom they

were addressed; but such reading was probably not at all regular. There was no thought of putting them on a level with the sacred Hebrew Scriptures, the public reading of which the Christian congregations seem to have transferred from the Jewish synagogues to their own assemblies.

The way in which Clement of Rome and the Ignatian Epistles speak of these letters* from the apostles to the churches shows that they were originally received by the churches as they were indited by their authors, —that is, simply as affectionate addresses from those whom the Lord himself had deemed most worthy of this work. Since these letters were in some instances designed for more than one church, and were in all cases adapted for the building-up of the common Christian faith, and since they were composed by teachers so revered and trusted, copies of them were multiplied and spread among the early Christian communities. In the meantime, certain other writings that came either directly or indirectly from the same apostolic sources were slowly making their way according to the customary methods of the time.

Before the middle of the second century we find scattered traces of the existence of the separate New-Testament writings, and of the esteem in which they were held as fit for public reading in the churches. But this is far from proving the existence of anything like a New-Testament Canon. For the writings that were regarded as inspired and profitable for public reading did not all by any means attain a place in the

*D. S. S., i., p. 655 f.

Canon.* For example, the "Shepherd of Hermas" was used somewhat widely for public reading in the churches; the "Epistle of Clement" is declared to have been read of old in most of the churches; it is reported of the "Epistle of Soter" that it was read by the Corinthians on the holy Lord's day as they had read the earlier epistle written to them by Clement; the same distinction was in some places given to the "Apocalypse of Peter."

During all this period, then, the principal work of Christian scholarship consists in showing that these New-Testament writings were in existence as separate writings, and that they were written by the persons to whose names they are assigned; or else that they have other marks of being authentic apostolic instruction (at first or second hand) regarding the nature of true Christianity and the practice of the true Christian life. Into the evidence for the existence and authenticity of the New-Testament writings during this earliest period we cannot enter in detail. Let it suffice to state the following conclusions: At the close of the second century the present four Gospels were received as the genuine and sole canonical Gospels,—all other claimants to a similar position having ceased to be regarded as rivals of these four, by common consent of the churches; their public reading was widely and firmly established; and many copies of them were distributed throughout the entire Christian world. They were continually quoted and appealed to as authoritative Scripture for the instruction of believers regarding the

* D. S. S., i., p. 656 f.

true history of our Lord's teachings and life. The judgment of the churches was also concordant with respect to the Acts, thirteen epistles of Paul, one epistle of Peter and one of John, and the Book of Revelation; these writings were all regarded as canonical. From this point onward we are able to consider these undisputed books of the New Testament as united with the canonical Hebrew Scriptures to constitute one Bible accepted by the body of Christian believers.

But the unsatisfactory nature of oral tradition and the need of written sources was, of course, becoming more apparent as the Church drew farther away in history from Christ and the Apostles. Moreover, the Church was threatened in doctrine and life by many and troublesome heretical sects. There was increasing need that the question, What is true Christianity and what is true for a Christian to believe and right for him to do? should receive some authoritative answer. But if the need of an answer to this question was increasing, the difficulty of it was increasing also. During this second period, then, the key to a knowledge of the historical process by which the canon of the New Testament was formed is to be found in this fact: The process is referable to the overcoming, by the Church catholic, of an original opposition between Jewish Christianity and Paulinism.

It was the union of the two principal tendencies,—the Jewish-Christian and the Gentile-Christian, which had earlier run along somewhat separate,—in the one current of thought and feeling within a Christian Church catholic, that made it possible to establish a

canon of sacred Scripture. The Jewish-Christian tendency had softened the sharp contrast which Paul found it necessary to draw between the spirit and the letter; the writers of this period, therefore, give more emphasis to the perfect and permanent character of the Old-Testament revelation. But this tendency had also itself so far been softened in its opposition to the Gentile form of Christianity as to permit the writings of Paul to be placed upon a level with those of the Old Testament. Thus the recognition of one Bible with two classes of books, those of the Old Covenant and those of the New, became possible. This formation of one biblical canon, to be called by the title of "the Scripture" or "the Scriptures," was in fact completed about the close of the second century. But at this time there were still certain writings whose position remained doubtful, and a very plain distinction between those of the first rank and those of the second rank, among the New-Testament writings, was still observed.

In support of the position that the early Church received some seven of the New-Testament writings into the Canon, only on the understanding that they were inferior in rank to the others, and were not to be used for the establishment of doctrine with the authority of the apostolic teaching, a large number of witnesses might be cited throughout the entire second period. Of this number we need mention only two or three. Origen found the Epistle to the Hebrews to be a matter of strife in his day; Second Peter and Second and Third John he looked upon as disputed. The ancient canon of the Syrian translation, the Peshito, does not

contain the Apocalypse, Jude, Second Peter, and Second and Third John; but the earliest form of the Old Latin version probably contained all the present books except Hebrews, Second Peter, and James. Eusebius († 340) enumerates among the "Antilegomena," or doubtful and disputed books, James, Jude, Second Peter, Second and Third John. The Apocalypse he puts, only with hesitation, among the books generally recognized; elsewhere he places Hebrews with certain spurious and uncanonical writings like the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, etc.

All through this period there was a similar vacillation of views as to the way in which the Old-Testament Apocrypha should be regarded. Toward its close one Church Father (Epiphanius, † 403) mentions twenty-seven books of canonical Hebrew Scriptures, although enumerating them as twenty-two. Jeremiah appears as including, not Lamentations, but the apocryphal epistle bearing that name, and the apocryphal Book of Baruch. The list of Hebrew sacred books preceding the "Alexandrine manuscript" includes Judith, Tobit, Maccabees, Sirach, the Wisdom of Solomon, and First and Second Ezra.

The two names which had most weight in this process of fixing the canon during this period, and so for subsequent ages, were undoubtedly Jerome and Augustine. The view of the former as to the Old Testament is neither independent nor consistent with itself. In one place he utters a lively warning against the Apocrypha; in another he seems to concede the benefit of reading certain of these books, in deference to their

wide-spread existence and to the fact that he had found some of them in Hebrew. He is also inconsistent as to the doubtful books of the New Testament. He says of Hebrews that it is placed by many outside of the Pauline Epistles, and even that the custom of the Latin churches does not receive it as canonical. Some of the churches of the Greeks take the same liberty with the Apocalypse. Jude, he says, is still rejected by many; Second and Third John have been ascribed to a *presbyter* of that name. Some reject the Second Epistle of Peter.

The influence of Augustine was probably greater than that of any other one man in putting to rest the agitated questions of the Canon of sacred Scripture. This influence was, on the whole, pernicious. Augustine* would have everything settled by the principle of the authority of tradition; but the tradition was not uniform, and could not honestly be made so to appear. It was the necessities of a more strictly theological use of the Bible in the fight of the Church against her enemies which decided all questions of the Canon with this Church Father. In this way he took into the Canon a number of spurious and relatively worthless books. In his opinion the two apocryphal Books of Wisdom deserved to be considered as genuine prophetic and authoritative writings. His influence was very strong at the Synod of Hippo (393 A.D.). This synod enumerates as canonical *five* Books of Solomon, two of Maccabees, two of Ezra, and Tobit, and Judith.

From about this time onward for centuries an unhis

* D. S. S., i., p. 674 f.

torical and unscrupulous spirit held almost unbroken sway. The question of the Canon and the question what is true biblical teaching, came to be determined by an irrational appea to the dogmas of the Church Fathers, without any sincere and thorough attempt to investigate the grounds of a true answer to either of these questions. Yet occasional signs of more critical and discriminating views are not wholly wanting; for the influence of the great Church Father Jerome was rather favorable to some critical insight. The distinction between the most strictly canonical books of the Old Testament and the Old-Testament Apocrypha is not infrequently met with; and so is the sentiment that the latter are not to be used to establish doctrine. One author of the sixth century proposes the remarkable division of the Scriptures into three classes,—books of perfect authority, books of medium authority, and books of no authority. In the latter class he places the Song of Solomon. Indeed, it must be said of this writing that it would never have attained a place in the Canon at all, had it not been for the help of a fanciful and unwarrantable allegorical interpretation. The doubts as to the New-Testament Antilegomena are also sometimes referred to during this long period.

It was the indirect influence of the study of the classics which largely aided in reviving an interest in the study of the canon of sacred Scripture. The principle of the Reformation, which looked to the Bible as the sole authoritative source of teaching concerning what is true Christianity, operated powerfully in the same direction. It is well known how free were Lu-

ther's views on this subject.* We have seen how contemptuously even he sometimes treated certain of the canonical writings. He placed Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation at the end of the New Testament, and spoke of them as entitled to a lower consideration than "the right genuine and chief books." The first of these four he esteemed as the work of a worthy and learned man, a disciple of Paul; it has wood, hay, and straw in it, as well as gold and silver. Jude is a kind of transcript of Peter's epistle and is not needed to lay the foundations of faith. Luther did not consider the Book of Revelation to be the work of an apostle, and placed it in the lowest rank of prophetic writing, on a par with dreams and other such means of knowing the future. Melanchthon's judgment was similar to Luther's, but more mildly expressed. Carlstadt divided the writings of the Bible into three grades.

Calvin did not recognize grades in canonicity. He did not, however, consider Hebrews to be the work of Paul, nor Second Peter to be the work of the apostle; he passed over in silence the questions of the canonicity of the Apocalypse and Second and Third John. The Reformers generally considered the Apocrypha useful, but not of authority in doctrine; this is the position of various great reformed Creeds and Confessions of faith. It is the only position in which the view of the Reformation made any improvement upon the view of Roman Catholicism with respect to the canon of sacred Scripture. Or rather, in this view the Protestants succeeded to the view of the Church in the past;

* D. S. S., i., p. 678 f.

while Roman Catholicism went on to take a new and false position. For the Council of Trent anathematized all who did not receive all the books contained in the Latin translation of the Bible, in the same form and the same contents in which they existed therein. It thus contradicted the voice of the Church itself by placing the Apocrypha upon a par with the other books of the Bible.*

During the period which we have characterized as *post*-Reformation, when the reign of an irrational and unscriptural theological dogmatism was most nearly supreme in the Protestant churches, the principle of tradition in its worst form again controlled the question of the Canon. But now, alas! the tradition was divided. The Protestant view, formed with an utter disregard of all the history of early Christianity and of the clearly expressed opinions of many of the great Reformers, *levelled up* all the biblical books to meet the lofty demands of complete fidelity to dogma. It thus virtually contradicted an important truth of Protestantism, which requires that all parts of sacred Scripture shall be considered in the light of the central doctrines of faith; or, in other words, that the canon shall be formed, and the different books assigned their place and degree of value and authority, "*Christo-centrically.*"

The Roman Catholics, with an equal disregard of the meaning of history and the real truth in the case, decreed that all should be *levelled down*, so as to throw around them the wall of a churchly infallibility. Both

* D. S. S., i., p. 680.

parties deified as "infallible" somewhat else than Christ, who is alone the infallible source of our Christian knowledge of God as the Redeemer of mankind. For Him alone should the title "Word of God," in the highest sense, be reserved. But this *post*-Reformation dogma attempted to identify the Word of God and the canonical writings of the Old and New Testaments throughout.

During the sixteenth century occasional prominent advocates of a truer and more historical and scriptural view appear. Such dissenting views were almost entirely repressed, however, in the seventeenth century; and the question of the canon was made a question, not of historical truth, but of dogmatic opinion. Then to distinguish grades in the sacred writings (as the Bible itself virtually does, and as the Jewish and Christian Church had done in forming the canon) became a deadly heresy. Finally, the regnant theology did not hesitate to make the false and mischievous statement, that history shows no dispute as to the equal authority of the biblical books!

The sceptical spirit of the eighteenth century, often in a coarse, and almost always in an ignorant and uncritical, way, attacked with bold assertion the orthodox view of the canon. Some of the English Deists regarded almost the entire Old Testament as ungenuine; others were ready indefinitely to enlarge the circle of canonical writings. Truer views of history and more candid recognition of the real facts of the case began to spread abroad toward the close of the last century. The researches of the present century have much enlarged

the number of interests and of inquiries concerned in any well-considered view of the canon. For those who believe in the truths of Christianity, and who examine with thorough critical zeal and yet with devout candor, the history of that process by which the total collection of writings deemed sacred by the Christian Church has come to its present form, the results of these researches may be stated somewhat as follows.

1. The history of that process through which the Christian Church has obtained its present collection of sacred writings—the Bible as we now have it—warrants a belief in the guidance of the Church by the Holy Spirit. With certain plain limitations of our meaning, we may speak of the "Canon of the Old and New Testaments" as inspired. Such a statement, however, does not imply the infallibility of the details of the process of selecting and combining the separate books. For here, as everywhere else, and once for all (if that were possible), must we make the distinction between "inspiration" and "infallibility." The process of forming the canon of sacred Scripture has been similar to that in which God's Spirit has brought about all great moral and spiritual growths in the body of believers. The general result has been that the Church has a perfectly unique collection of religious books which have come to be united as one into a volume called *the* Book, the Bible.

2. But all canonical Scripture has not the same value, degree, and kind of inspiration, degree and kind of usefulness, doctrinal authority, or even claim to the title of canonicity. The history of the canon not only

permits, but it requires, that we should make distinctions among the books of sacred Scripture. The actual process of forming the canon, both of the Old Testament by the Jewish Church and of the New Testament by the Christian Church, was based upon such making of distinctions. It was only as confessedly of a lower grade and without authority in determining what is essential to Christian doctrine, that certain of the New-Testament writings even found their way into the circuit of canonical Scripture. The claim of the great body of writings in both Testaments to a place in canonical Scripture, to a place in the Bible, has indeed been almost uniformly recognized by the Church. But, in both Testaments, some writings have been allowed to enter only after a contest; and then to a position which was not of an acknowledged first rank.

It does not follow, however, that the Christian Church of to-day must make exactly the same distinctions as those made, for example, by the Jewish rabbis in the days of Ezra and afterward. Those rabbis may have thought the books ascribed to Moses so much more sacred than the Psalms that the manuscript-rolls of the two should not be allowed to come into contact. But Christian experience relatively exalts the Psalms. The rabbis refused to place Daniel on a par with Ezekiel; but we, without caring so much for the grounds of their decision, do not forget that the former is he who has that vision of the coming "Son of man," which Christ appropriates to Himself. In the relatively low estimate which they took of the later writings of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Ruth, we find

good grounds for sympathizing with them. We can see why they hesitated about receiving Esther, the Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes, to the canon; and spoke disparagingly of them after they were received.

When we understand thoroughly the attitude in which the early Church found itself in the third and fourth centuries toward its own sacred literature of a Christian origin, we can but admire the spiritual insight which this attitude implies, although such insight was not mixed with critical skill. Indeed, we can say, almost without any qualifications whatever, that we receive the holy Scriptures of the New Testament as the Christian Church which stood nearest to Christ and to the apostles received these same Scriptures. Our assent to the doctrine of sacred Scripture is thus *catholic*, in the best sense of the word.

But from the narrow, polemical, and ignorant dogmatism of that view to which the *post*-Reformation Protestant sects came, when they had departed from the spirit of early Christianity and of the earlier and great reformers, we dissent most-emphatically. We find its doctrine of the canon contrary to Scripture, contrary to the teaching of Christ and the apostles, contrary to the voice of the early Church, and contrary to the witness of the Holy Ghost in the minds and consciences of all believers. And so far as the remnants and dregs of this dogma are still to be found in the traditional way of answering the question, What is the Bible? we appeal from this traditional way to Christ, to the Church catholic, and to enlightened Christian judgment and feeling.

3. We are, therefore, compelled to recognize the varied uses of the different parts of the Bible, and their different degrees of value in these uses; but all this is an argument for, rather than against, the divine origin and nature of the Bible. The Church of God has a varied life, and various needs to be supported in the development of that life. It is a valuable exercise for the Church to be called upon to criticise and test the claims of various writings to a position in its canon of sacred Scripture, and to discriminate the various uses and values which the different parts of this Scripture possess. Believers are not called to the acceptance once for all of traditional forms of opinion, but to the work of discrimination and to growth in maturity of judgment.

4. The Bible, as a whole, has a claim to a divine origin and nature which is in a manner beyond the claims of any of its separate books. What one member of the organism leaves undone, another member may do. The means for correcting such errors of any kind as lie within the Bible are chiefly furnished by the Bible itself. The histories of the New Testament, for example, supplement and correct each other; it is as taken together and studied in their relations that they give us the more complete and true picture of what was the life and work of the divine personality of whom they tell.

5. Finally, if we seek for some permanent standard by which to measure all these parts of sacred Scripture and so assign them to their place, as respects the value and authority of their declarations and teachings, we

may find such a standard in the Bible itself. The canon of sacred Scripture, like that scheme of divine revelation of which it furnishes the authentic record, is *Christo-centric.* Its historical writings are to be considered in relation to that personality who is the centre of the historical self-revelation of God as the Redeemer of man. Its moral and religious teachings are all to be regarded in the light in which they stand to Him who is the truth of the redeemed and eternal life among men. This is as true of all the writings within the biblical canon as it is of those without. To be a part of the Bible does not discharge any book from its obligations to conform to this standard.

The Text of the Bible was the last and most desperate resort of the *post*-Reformation dogma of the infallibility of sacred Scripture. For this dogma necessarily requires a perfect certainty as to the biblical text. But an examination of the ancient manuscripts showed that no infallible text exists. Yet it is plain that, if the perfect infallibility of the Bible—that is, its absolute freedom from every kind of error—is to be of any practical use whatever, this quality of infallibility must be lodged in some *existing* text. But the present existence of such a text being disproved beyond doubt, the dogma had recourse to the supposition that only the original manuscripts, as they came from the hands of their authors, need be free from every manner of error, in order that faith may be secure. Now it cannot escape notice what a strange and perverse form of argument is here maintained. It is first said that there can be no

error in the Bible without endangering the very foundations of faith. But at once the question arises, Where is this Bible which is in every letter and syllable free from error, and which is God's Word throughout in the strictest sense of the term? Surely it does not consist of either of the existing English translations of the Bible. If the older English version was infallible, why should a new one be proposed? If the revised version is infallible, why do the so-called friends of the Bible object so vehemently to the changes it has introduced?

Is it, then, any one of the existing Greek and Hebrew manuscripts which gives to us the infallible Word of God? The oldest Hebrew manuscripts are much more than a thousand years distant from their originals, and demonstrably depart from those originals in many particulars. And not one of the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, since they differ among themselves in thousands of instances, can claim to stand as the infallible, the perfectly errorless text. It is necessary, then, to admit that we do not possess and can never recover the text of this infallible Bible. It must have been, if it ever existed at all, the text of the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. But these original texts have long since perished; we can never know precisely what their readings were in respect to innumerable disputed points.

And yet Christian faith stands secure. We are, after all, then, *obliged* and able to maintain our faith without such a Bible as the *post*-Reformation dogma states we are *obliged* to have, in order that faith may be maintained. If, says the dogma, error be admitted in

Scripture, then our faith, being based on Scripture, will totter. But the faith we have cannot be based on such Scripture, since such Scripture has perished once for all with the original manuscripts. We must, then, build our faith on a Bible which is confessedly not what the dogma insists upon as necessary to any secure faith; and what the dogma insists we must have, we cannot by any possibility ever obtain.

There is no room for doubt as to the general fact that numerous variations and corruptions exist in the present text of the Bible. Holy Scripture has not been given to men in the form of diplomatic certainty and infallibility. As far back as we can go in the history of God's Church, it has ever been the same. In giving some account of the biblical text we shall simply mention a few points of general interest regarding the origin and nature of the existing Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Illustration of the subject must be almost entirely omitted; for illustration implies a critical knowledge of the minutiæ of the Hebrew and Greek languages.

The oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament are, in part, "Torah-rolls," which were prepared upon parchment (and earlier still upon leather); and which contain the so-called "Kethib," or standard text of the Pentateuch, written without vowel-points; they are also, in part, codices in book-form, which contain either the whole or some part of the Old Testament written with the so-called Masoretic punctuation.* Of these manuscripts the oldest extant are not older than the thirteenth

*D. S. S., i., p. 694 f.

and twelfth centuries after Christ. In the Middle Ages there were certain copies of the Hebrew Bible which served as samples of a classic text. This classic text is one which has been "fixed," not by critical examination and comparison of the many variant manuscripts which it superseded, but by giving written expression to oral tradition and by indulging in much learned conjecture. The process of "fixing the text" began after the completion of the Talmud, in the sixth century of the Christian era. Hence the condition of the manuscripts of the Old Testament is unlike that of the manuscripts of the New Testament. The latter show a great diversity in details. The former are all made conformable to one type, which is known to us as the "Masoretic." This type was selected by the learned Jewish rabbis who "fixed" the text; as a type, it does not go back farther than the second and subsequent centuries after Christ.

The Hebrew manuscripts earlier than the Masoretic text were not punctuated or accented; that is, the consonants were written down alone and in close connection with each other. The pronunciation of the words, and in many cases their meaning, so far as dependent upon the vowels, was a matter of oral tradition. When this consonantal text was punctuated in writing,—that is, when the points which indicated the vowels were written in,—the punctuation had the force of a kind of traditional commentary. The present or Masoretic text may be said, then, to reproduce that construction of the sense of a passage which has prevailed since the Christian era. It is not unchangeable, much less infal-

lible. It is plainly fallible in its nature, on account of the character of its origin; it is demonstrably wrong in certain particulars. But it is by far the most valuable help which we have to an understanding of what was the real meaning of the earlier and unpunctuated manuscripts.

We see, then, that our present complete text of the Old Testament consists of two elements,—namely, the traditional way of writing the consonants; and the traditional way of pronouncing the words indicated by these consonants, or of reading what was written. To help him appreciate this difference, the person unlearned in Hebrew may select a passage from some English author, print it in capital letters, but without vowels or punctuation or separation between the words, and then read it aloud with the attempt to render its exact meaning. We see, also, that the written expression for the traditional way of reading the vowels into the text was the result of a complex process which went on during several centuries, beginning after the close of the Talmudic era.

The manuscript authority for our present Hebrew text, as combined of the two elements described above, does not go back of the twelfth century after Christ. The trustworthiness of this text as a whole depends, therefore, upon the trustworthiness of certain manuscripts which had only the consonants written, and the trustworthiness of that oral tradition as to the correct way of reading these consonants which prevailed in the Talmudic era.

The difficulties which encompass the effort to get

back to the original manuscripts of the sacred writers of the Old Testament, are as yet only just entered upon when we have reached the beginning of the Talmudic era. Scholars can speak very highly of the care which the rabbis took during this era to secure and propagate a pure text; although the rabbis were neither able nor desirous to accomplish their task by the employment of the best critical methods. But between the time of Ezra and the beginning of the Talmudic era it does not appear that anything like the same careful zeal for a pure text prevailed.

The farther back inquiry goes into the obscurity of the pre-Christian times, the greater becomes the difficulty and the uncertainty. The witnesses are far from being in accord. The oldest of these witnesses are the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch; but these vary most from the Masoretic text. The three Greek translations of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, are not concordant. The Syriac, when independent of the Septuagint, differs in places so widely that it seems to be a translation of another form of the Hebrew.* It is calculated that the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew and accords with the Samaritan Pentateuch in about one thousand places; that about the same number of reverse cases occur; while in certain other cases the Septuagint stands entirely alone. Yet among the Hellenistic Jews in Christ's time, this variant and imperfect Greek translation had taken the place of the Hebrew text, both for public and for private reading; many of the New-Testament writers quote from it for

* D. S. S., i., p. 700 f.

the most part,--especially so do Mark and Paul. How can the dogma of the infallibility of the biblical text maintain itself for an instant in the face of this fact?

It appears, then, that very great and irremovable uncertainty exists as to the correct text of the Old Testament, even so far as concerns the manuscripts that were in existence when the canon of the Old Testament was being closed. But if we try to go back of the Masoretic, the Talmudic, and the *post*-Exilian eras, back to those centuries when the older books of the Hebrew Scriptures were in process of formation, we have absolutely no means, except the very uncertain conjectures of internal criticism, for telling what was the condition of *their* text. The Pentateuch in its present form—it has already been shown—was centuries in the process of formation; many hands labored upon it; its written laws were enacted at different periods and lay neglected and almost unknown through long periods of time; and their text was freely handled by the scribes who amended and reproduced it. And yet it was this portion of the Hebrew Bible which the framers of its canon regarded most highly and esteemed most especially inspired.

When we turn our attention from the case of the Old Testament to that of the New, we find much more abundant opportunity for the exercise of Christian scholarship in determining which is probably the best text of its different books. Practically, what has to be done is to fix upon that form of words which seems to have the most evidence in its favor as correctly representing the best manuscripts of the fourth century

after Christ. Respecting the condition of the text of the New-Testament books at this date, almost all the important matters can be decided by direct inspection, and there is little need to resort to conjecture. There are three classes of witnesses to be consulted in the effort to fix this conjectural original text; these are the manuscripts, the ancient translations, and the citations of the earlier Church Fathers. The chief reliance must be placed, of course, upon the manuscripts.

The autograph copies of the New-Testament writings had perished, so that no trace of them appears, before the individual books had come to be received as of canonical value. It is not likely that either their authors or their readers regarded them with anything approaching the interest we should bestow upon them. Their authors, or the amanuenses who wrote for them, were liable to any of the mistakes which occur in the construction of all ancient manuscripts; the makers of the first copies from these originals could not be sure of copying them with a perfect accuracy.

The very nature, as well as the fate, of these original manuscripts was such as to rebuke any undue attachment to what is literal or outward and perishable. At that time manuscripts were of parchment only occasionally; usually, they were of a cheaper and less durable material made from the papyrus of Egypt.* Later on parchment was more used; paper made of cotton appears in the ninth century A.D., and in the thirteenth, linen paper. How perishable these ancient books were, we may judge from the statement of

*D. S. S., i., p. 709 f.

Jerome, who tells us that in a single century the library at Cæsarea had fallen into decay. The divine Word of salvation, as respects its written record and promulgation, was committed of God to the ordinary and rapidly corrupting means available at that time. It was to live by being propagated, not in perfection of letter but in substance of spiritual truth, from hand to hand and mind to mind.

The text of the New Testament was doubtless originally written without punctuation or divisions. Some of the oldest extant manuscripts of it, like the Vatican codex, make use of scarcely any such means for determining the sense. Accordingly many disputes occur among the early Church Fathers as to the right reading when it is dependent upon the punctuation. Thus some of them, in John i. 3, connect the clauses so as to make them read, "What has been made was in him life"; or, "What has been made in him was life." This connection of the clauses was subsequently rejected, not on linguistic but on theological grounds.

In the fifth century, and afterward, a number of the New-Testament writings were arranged by being divided into lines of such length that they could be read somewhat rhythmically in a single breath. To save room, the separation of the lines was subsequently made by a point or an enlarged letter. Other means of punctuation were also resorted to; and about the beginning of the sixteenth century the present form of punctuation came into use. It is not known whether the writers themselves employed sections or chapters in the New-Testament text. Very small divisions

(Matthew containing 355, Mark 234, Luke 342, John 231) were in wide use very early. About the fifth century a division of the Gospels into larger sections originated; and the present division into chapters is ascribed to Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury († 1228).

It is of little real value to count the mere number of the existing manuscripts of the New Testament in Greek. They are of two kinds, uncials and cursives. Of the former, which are almost entirely our reliance in fixing the text, there are said to be sixty-one of the Gospels, fifteen of the Acts, seven of the Catholic, and twenty of the Pauline Epistles. The chief ones are named ℵ, A, B, C; and, for its suggestive though strange variations, the manuscript D. There are many more cursive manuscripts; but these are all of little or no authority, except as indirect witnesses.

The variations and corruptions of the text of the New Testament are as many in number, and such in kind, as we should expect from the nature of the case. The Divine Spirit in Providence has used no extraordinary means to preserve the accurate and uncorrupted transmission of this sacred text. The variations to which we are introduced by consulting all the manuscripts are probably more than a hundred thousand; most of them are trifling in importance and affect only the *minutiæ* of the verbal form; but many of them are more serious, and a few are very important. The essential teachings of the New Testament as to what the Christianity of Christ and the apostles is, and therefore as to what is true for a Christian to think and

right for him to do, are, however, not affected by these variations.

It would be tedious for the general reader were we to enumerate and illustrate the nature and probable origin of all the different kinds of corruption and variation to which the text of the New Testament has been subjected. Marginal notes have crept into the text through either the intentional manipulation or the carelessness of scribes. Words have been omitted, or inserted, or their order varied; and changes in spelling are numerous. Some errors are due to the fact that the eye of the scribe wandered from the end of one to the end of another of two clauses ending with the same words, in such a way as to cause the omission of the intervening words. Vowels and diphthongs having similar sounds are confused, where the writing has apparently been from dictation; and, according to the nature of the Greek language, such changes sometimes make an important change in the meaning.

The customary abbreviation of certain words—by which the first and last letters, for example, of the names, "God," "Lord," "Jesus," "Christ," were put for the entire word—has in some instances led to a corruption of the text. The most important case of this kind occurs in 1 Tim. iii. 16, where the Greek word for "who" has been corrupted in some manuscripts into the abbreviation for the word "God." The officious amending of the text by scribes, which has entered so largely into the Old Testament, has done relatively little to corrupt the New Testament. It has not, however, been wholly wanting even here. In some places the text of

one Evangelist has been changed in order to assimilate it more nearly to that of some other Evangelist. The influence of dogmatic considerations has sometimes been influential and even decisive. Jerome foresaw that he would be called "false" and "sacrilegious" for his critical work upon the Latin translation.

In general, then, it must be admitted that no form of words at all approaching a standard of infallible accuracy has been preserved to clothe for us the eternal truth of that one Divine Word, which is the truth of redemption brought to men in the historical process of God's self-revelation, culminating in Jesus Christ. Within certain limits there is wide-spread and irremovable uncertainty concerning the text of the Old and New Testaments. The words which have come down to us in the extinct Hebrew and Greek manuscripts cannot be regarded as, all and severally, the very words of God. But the Word of God, the truth of the Gospel in the largest and loftiest sense of this phrase, nevertheless remains sure. Its sufficient, authentic, and authoritative record is the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This record has not been preserved free from those frailties, changes, and errors which belong to all human works; but it has been so preserved that we know what biblical religion is, and especially what true Christianity is,—what is true for a Christian to think and right for a Christian to do. How and in what sense this declaration is justified, we shall consider in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER XIII.

BIBLICAL REVELATION AND INSPIRATION.

In that answer to the question, What is the Bible? which is at once the more modern and more ancient, the idea of "revelation" as applied to the sacred writings, is more important than the idea of inspiration. In determining the nature and origin of these writings, the idea of revelation is really much the more primary, comprehensive, and controlling. It is indispensable at this point, then, that we should gain clear notions as to the character of biblical revelation; and this can be done only by the study of the Bible itself.

The possibility that God will reveal Himself cannot be denied without denying the reality and personality of God. To reject all divine self-revelation is to reject all divine personal Being. For all religion, all knowledge of God and all faith in Him, rests on revelation; and without such revelation there can be no religion at all. In order that God may be known *by* man, it is necessary that God should make Himself known *in* man; and this making of Himself known is the result of His own self-revealing activity. The Bible never once implies that there can be any true religion without divine self-revelation. True religion implies the communion of God and man; but in all such communion God himself takes the initiative.

It requires only one additional thought to convey the truth that all the biblical teachings also imply the necessity of divine self-revelation. Man cannot find God unless God make Himself known to man. If man had never sinned it would still have been necessary for God to have revealed Himself to man and within man, since all knowledge and love of divine and spiritual realities originates in and comes from the Infinite One himself. But man's sin, and his ignorance and degradation resulting from sin, create the special need of revelation of a particular kind. The revelation which *sinful* man needs is the revelation of God as the Redeemer of man. If God do not make Himself known to man as his redeemer from sin, then no redemption from sin can take place.

Now, all true divine self-revelation, every making of Himself known by God, has the following characteristics: It is truly supernatural and heavenly, but it is also based upon and limited by historical conditions. It is *of* God, *in* history. Let us briefly consider what is involved in this. Any knowledge of God and divine things, in order to be entitled to the name of a "revelation," must have in it an element of originality. It is this characteristic of originality which emphasizes the supernatural or peculiarly divine quality of all revelation. There must be something "creative" in revelation. If, for example, old and familiar thoughts of God and divine things recur to the mind, we do not speak of their recurrence as a revelation in the more restricted and suggestive use of the word; but when the Divine Spirit makes known to us something new

and original on these matters, we say that this new truth has been "revealed" to us. As with the individual, so it is with the race. We recognize the new truths, or largely new views of old truths, which comparatively few men receive, as "revelations" in the more real and noble meaning of the word.

But all revelation, and particularly all biblical revelation, has the characteristic of continuousness. The new truth always comes into a world that is old. The world is always growing older as every successive disclosure of new divine truth is made within the world. Now, the truth cannot be revealed to man respecting God as the Redeemer unless the revelation complies with historical conditions. To *whom* is the truth to be made known? Under what circumstances, in what stages of cultivation, with what rapidity and degrees of progress, can the truth be disclosed?—these and similar questions must always concern the nature of God's revelation of Himself to man. To the childhood of the race comes the moral and religious truth adapted for the state of childhood; to the later stages, that which is fitted to each stage. The truth disclosed by revelation is, therefore, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear."

Thus every part of a true process of revelation will be related, according to a steadfast divine plan, to every other part. The old-fashioned deists (like Tindal and Reimarus) used flippantly to ask—"Why did not revelation at once follow the fall of man?"—and "How can God be good who waited so long to make His grace known in the redemption of mankind?" In the

light of all our experience of the methods of the divine procedure such questions as these are absurd. We might as well ask, Why should there be any time at all? Why any degrees and stages of perfection? God does everything in an historical way; the conditions of history are not imposed on Him, they are only His own divine and glorious mode of action in the world. The biblical revelation has pre-eminently this character of historical and continuous development.

Moreover, every true and powerful form of divine revelation is in need of a positive character; it fixes itself among men in some definite form of manifestation and so becomes an institution of which the history of the race takes note. In this way alone is it able to influence the shaping of the race. History requires positive institutions; it is these of which men take most account; it is by them that men are largely disciplined and moulded; it is in them that the choicest results of human thought and feeling are embodied. Thus the Mosaic Law, with its concrete enactments and requirements, and the order of the prophets, with its periods of schools, and common stock of ideas and canon of prophetic writings, had a positive character as divine revelations. From time to time God brought before the nation of Israel, through its great geniuses of a moral and religious kind, the more abstract statement of truths regarding His own mysterious Being and mode of action. He revealed to them "I AM THAT I AM"; I love righteousness and hate iniquity. But He also, and more frequently, made Himself known as an omnipresent and ever-living spiritual force, by constantly

bidding them through their priests and lawgivers behold Him in the definite and positive form of ritualistic and civil ordinances. So, too, Christianity is not alone nor chiefly revealed as a body of abstract principles. God makes Himself known as the Redeemer of man in the positive institution of the Christian Church. Revealed moral and religious truth is not left by the Spirit hanging in mid-air, as it were.

For similar reasons is all revelation a gradual affair. It has stages, degrees of progress and of perfection; it does not reach its culmination all at once. This is true in a marked way of biblical revelation. The Old-Testament order has a gradual unfolding, in which, however, several notable stages and epochs are to be traced. But this preparatory order gives way to, or rather is taken up into and realized in, a higher and Christian order of revelation. The latter also has its grades, degrees, and stages of progress; for there is a development of doctrine, discipline, and life, to be traced in the New-Testament writings.

Now the incomparable superiority of the biblical revelation to all other forms of the divine self-disclosure does not consist in its being totally unlike all these other forms with respect to the characteristics just mentioned. On the contrary, it consists in its realizing these characteristics most fully and grandly. Moreover, it is the only revelation which makes God known as the promised and actual Redeemer of man, in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord. All religion, ancient and modern, implies the fact that God makes Himself known to man; this is revelation No other than bib-

lical religion shows God to man as his righteous and gracious Redeemer from sin in an historical way. Other ancient religions are, therefore, seen to be devoid of divine progressive quality.

We may further classify our conceptions of the peculiar nature of biblical revelation by considering how it answers the following questions: Who is the revealer? To whom is the revelation made? What is it that is revealed? and, What is the form of the revelation? The agent, the one who reveals, in all revelation, is God. In the Bible, the agent of revelation is God as the inspiring and sanctifying Spirit, the energizing source of all moral and spiritual illumination and life; or it is God as the Logos, the Revealer, the Eternal Word. This revelation is made to man, whom the Bible regards as, not simply in his physical but also in his moral and spiritual nature, a child of God. That which is revealed in all revelation is God,—as He stands related to the world, to the soul of man, and to the course of history. But that which is especially revealed in the Bible is God as the Redeemer of man, and the doings of God in the historical process of human redemption. The form of biblical revelation is manifold; it is by history, miracle, law, prediction, and doctrine; but is pre-eminently in and by the God-man Jesus Christ.

Let us now consider somewhat more fully the last of the questions just mentioned. It has already been said that the form or method of biblical revelation is manifold. The biblical history is one of the factors or forms of the biblical revelation. By this it is not meant that the facts of this history were all, or any of them,

infallibly made known as facts (*revealed*) by the Divine Spirit to the men who recorded them. There is no proof whatever that God ever operated in this way upon the sacred historians. Nor, if this had been done, would it of itself constitute the biblical writings a true *revelation* in the better and higher meaning of the word.

The biblical history is plainly the record of an historical process of divine self-revelation.

But the biblical history is not simply a record of revelation. This history itself, considered with respect to what its events in their order and significance really were (that is, "objectively" considered), was a main factor in revelation. God revealed Himself *in* the history; He made men know Him as their Redeemer by what He actually brought to pass in history. And just so far as the writers of the history appreciate the meaning of what they record, their record becomes something more than a mere record of the history of revelation; it becomes itself a revelation, a making of God known to others. Even now Christians read the Old-Testament history and find the divine justice and grace in redemption revealed to them there in a special way. The death of Jesus, with all its preparation and attendant circumstances, is an historical fact; but what a mighty revelation of God is this fact!

That the biblical revelation came by miracles and prediction we do not need to argue. The former of these methods sets the revealed truth before the mind as embodied in something extraordinary which happens within external nature; the latter gives it in the form in which it is breathed by divine inspiration within

the prophetic soul. Law, too, forms an important element in biblical revelation. This fact renders the biblical revelation in some regards special and unique. The idea of the divine righteousness is an idea which demands a position of pre-eminence in any system of divine revelation. God must make Himself known to man as an object of obedience; the divine self-revelation must result in man's rendering a loving obedience to God. But precisely what shall man do in order to obey God? The Mosaic law answered this question in a positive though only temporary way. It thus revealed God to Israel as righteous. When the pattern of perfect obedience has been given to the world in Jesus Christ, then God may say to the world, "Follow Him and you obey me." When the motive in all men's hearts has become that of a loving loyalty to Christ, then the painstaking and fearful following of concrete legal enactments may safely cease.

In claiming that doctrine is an important mode of the biblical revelation, we must take pains not to fall again into an old mischievous error. The *post*-Reformation theory of the Bible considered the principal office of the Bible to be that of imparting a ready-made system of religious dogmas. This theory assumed that religion consists chiefly, if not almost exclusively, in knowledge, and that advance in religion consists in the enlargement of our religious conceptions and intuitions. The theory proved itself a vicious one. But, on the other hand, knowledge is an inseparable element of religion; and whenever God makes any revelation of Himself, this revelation necessarily consists, in

part, in the stirring up of some thought in human minds. The undoubted result of the biblical revelation has been that the human race *knows* vastly more than it would otherwise have done, about God and His grace, as it goes out toward man for his redemption from sin.

But the one chief way of making God known as the divine Redeemer of man, to which all the other factors of biblical revelation point, and in which their essence and influence are most fully realized, is the person of the God-man Jesus Christ. He is *the* revelation of God as Redeemer, rather than the chief factor of such revelation. In Him God is, and is made known; in Christ, God is made known to man as man. His moral personality and activities in man's behalf set before the world the justice and grace of God as exercised in redeeming man.

What—we now inquire—is the final purpose of the biblical revelation? The final purpose of revelation in general may be differently defined according to the point of view from which it is regarded. The divine quality which receives a special emphasis, which is preeminently brought forward in the biblical revelation, is the divine *grace*. The purpose of its revelation has then been said to be "the self-manifestation of God as the God of grace"; but it is not the manifestation of any one divine attribute, however glorious, which gives the ground and final purpose of the biblical revelation; this must be sought in something more comprehensive. It is the redemption of the race which forms the promised completion of the process of revelation. A perfected kingdom of redemption is finally to be estab-

lished; the goal and end of the biblical revelation is to be found in this kingdom.

When considering the tests of biblical revelation, we must distinguish between those which are satisfactory to the individual as showing him that he is indeed the recipient of a genuine divine revelation, and those proofs which are valid to show that the Bible contains and is a revelation of God to the race. *For the individual prophet or apostle himself* no test of the genuineness of the revelations made to him could be superior to his own pure and clear conviction of such communion with God. When God speaks to a soul there is, for *that* soul, no other evidence that the voice is indeed divine so convincing as the evidence brought into the soul with the voice itself.

But how shall new truth, when communicated through the inspired prophet or apostle, make good in the community of believers at large its claim to be a genuine divine revelation? No other answer can be defended than this: The community of believers is the ultimate authority, its moral and religious consciousness the last appeal. The ever-living Church of God is, in a most important and valid meaning of these words, both before and over the Bible itself. The Bible comes from this community of believers as already existing by virtue of their immediate spiritual relations to God. The Church in the past has brought the Bible into being; the Church tests the revelations made to the individual prophets and apostles, who are no less members and servants of the Church, because they are divinely appointed as its inspired leaders

Hence the Old-Testament prophet made his appeal to the general moral consciousness of believing Israel. The New-Testament apostle addresses, in the name of God who is the Redeemer of the world through Jesus Christ, his spiritual brethren in the faith. What both prophet and apostle have spoken and written is passed upon by the Christian conscience and judgment of the community, before it can become a part of those Scriptures which the Christian Church recognizes as presenting before herself the authoritative sources of her doctrine and life.

Biblical revelation is also divided into two great historical divisions, each of which has several stages. The earlier form of that revelation in which God makes Himself known as the Redeemer is all preparatory and pedagogic; it makes ready for the later form; it trains the world so that it may the better understand and receive this later form. Such is the Old-Testament office and significance. This form of revelation has three clearly-marked stages of revelation,—namely, the patriarchal, the legal, and the prophetic. The division holds good even if we find ourselves unable to accept the ordinary chronological arrangement of the Old-Testament books, and the ordinary view of the chronological order of the development of these stages. In the first of these three stages God is represented by the Bible as graciously making Himself known to a few heads of the nation whom He calls out from the surrounding peoples for this very purpose.* In the

* See Heb. xi. 8; compare Gen. xii. 1; and see D. S. S., ii., p. 337.

next stage the same divine grace makes itself manifest in concrete institutions, and deals with the lawless will of man by binding it in obedience to definite commands, which are to be recognized as having a divine origin. In the third stage of Old-Testament revelation the inward prophetic word is exalted. God puts His Spirit upon and within certain pious individuals, and makes known to them the applications of His justice and love to the conduct of the nation, and to His own plan of saving the nation and, through it, the race.

The New-Testament form of revelation is the realization of all the permanent and ideal elements of the earlier form. The source of the new form is the same as that of the old; it is grace, abounding grace. For grace is to "reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"; it abounds "exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." This later form of biblical revelation also has its stages; but it runs through them all with such rapidity, and they are so closely connected with the development of the Christian consciousness of the apostles that the entire result is much more a unity of thought and time than is the Old-Testament revelation.

Are we then to say that the Bible *contains* a revelation or that the Bible *is* a revelation? This question is often discussed so that it degenerates into a comparatively unimportant and frivolous one. Yet the question itself is not unimportant, much less frivolous. To answer it satisfactorily we must refer again to distinctions which have already been made.

The bare and abstract possibility of a so-called "book

revelation" cannot be denied. It is conceivable that God should have made known the entire Bible, at some definite time or times, to the writers of its books. The wild dream of rabbinical theorists was that the scribe Ezra wrote down, as it was divinely revealed and dictated to him, the whole canon of the lost Hebrew Scriptures. But the modern scholar knows that the Bible is not a "book-revelation," in any such sense of the word.

It may be claimed, in some sort, that God's great self-disclosure must take the form of a book-revelation, if it is to accomplish the full purpose of such a disclosure being made at all. For why does God make Himself known to man as man's Redeemer? Is it not in order that God may actually accomplish the redemption of man? But this redemption, thus actually to be accomplished, is an historical affair. One generation must tell to another the truths revealed, and the redemptive deeds accomplished, by God. This successive communication of revelation would seem to involve the necessity of fixing, at each stage, the main results of the revelation already completed. Nor is there any way of satisfactorily bringing this about without the institution of "sacred Scriptures."

The Bible cannot, therefore, be regarded as *merely* a "record" of revelation. The truth which the Bible contains and records would not itself have been revealed as it has been, if no Bible had come into existence. For example, the greatest prophets of Israel were influenced, to some extent at least, by their possession of written accounts of the law, and of the previous history

and prophecy of the nation. Upon the religious development of the people in the time which elapsed between the substantial completion of the Old-Testament books and the rise of New-Testament religion the sacred Hebrew Scriptures had a very profound effect. And it is impossible to say what the Christian doctrine and history would have been if the principal teachers and actors in primitive Christianity (including its founder, Jesus) had not been in the possession and use of the ancient sacred writings of this nation. Biblical revelation is not spasmodic; it is historical. Memory is as necessary to the growth of the race as of the individual. It belongs to the very idea of an historical revelation that there should be an accumulated store of divine communications. It is necessary, then, to regard the Bible as something more than a "record" of biblical revelation; the Bible is, at least, the bearer or "vehicle" of a unique and incomparable form of revelation.

But more than has just been said must be admitted as true. In some sort we must speak of the Bible, the circuit of sacred writings accepted by the Church as canonical, as being itself a revelation of God, the Redeemer of mankind. In so far as any book is a product of the divine process of making God known to human minds, it may itself be said to be a "revelation,"—that is, it is a result reached by giving written form to the truth which has been revealed to the mind of its author. In so far, also, as any book serves to make God known to the reader of it, such book becomes, and may be spoken of as being, a revelation to the reader. Now

the Bible is pre-eminently a revelation of God as the Redeemer of man, in both these senses of the word revelation. That is to say, the Bible generally—or large and commanding portions of it—is the product of that special process of revelation in which God actually made Himself known, to Israel and to the world, as the Redeemer of the world from sin. The history of the process is in large measure given in the Bible, not only in the form of historical facts that were ascertained in the ordinary way of becoming acquainted with such facts, but also as having a divine significance which was *revealed*, or made known by inspiration, to the writers themselves. This is especially true of the New-Testament writings, which all show that the significance of the facts of Christ's personality and career upon the earth was disclosed by the Holy Spirit to the authors of these writings.

Moreover, there can be no doubt that the Bible generally—or large and commanding portions of it—has actually been a revelation of God the Redeemer to those who have resorted to it to find what manner of Being God is. This is a matter which every Christian may test in his own experience. Every Christian may know, what no constructive or destructive school of criticism can impart or destroy, that his divine Lord and Saviour is indeed revealed to him in and by the sacred Scriptures. This truth, that God is the Redeemer, and the many implications and applications of it which the Bible really contains and legitimately conveys, is properly called the "Word of God" which is contained in the Bible. With this "Word of God"—as we shall see

subsequently—the entire circuit of canonical writings can by no means be identified throughout. But the real Word of God, as it is contained in sacred Scripture, is ever freshly revealed to the mind of the thoughtful and devout reader. That this is indeed so, every reader may make known in his own experience.

Once more in the same line of argument as the last point: The Bible serves as a revelation of God the Redeemer to the race. The Bible—using this term for those contents of moral and religious truth in the different forms of history, law, miracle, prediction, and doctrine, which the biblical books contain—performs the office of a self-communication of God in the process of Redemption. To many Christian communions, in certain eras of the life of the Christian Church, this service has been comparatively limited and only indirect. The Bible has often reached the people only through the priest or the preacher; it has often filtered down to them more indirectly still, through uncertain tradition or mistaken dogmatic form. Still if the Church in any age requires to know afresh, What are the facts and doctrines of genuine biblical religion? What is true Christianity? What is the right view of God and man as related in the process of redemption?—then the Church may resort to the Bible for the true answer to these questions; for it is the Bible that reveals this sort of truths to men, as no other books have done or can do.

CHAPTER XIV.

BIBLICAL REVELATION AND INSPIRATION.
(*Continued.*)

In considering the Inspiration of the Bible it is indispensable to begin with some knowledge of what the Bible itself teaches as to that Divine Spirit who, in the loftiest sense of the word, alone inspires. We must start, that is, from the biblical, rather than from any merely speculative or theological, conception of the Holy Ghost. Now the very use of the word "inspired," as applied to the biblical writings, seems to refer these writings to the Spirit of God rather than to God regarded either as the Father, or as the Logos or Son. The word "inspired" emphasizes the great truth of an omnipresent, personal, and self-communicating divine energy. It is an interesting fact that the biblical conception of "spirit," whether as applied to God or to man, is foreign to Greek thought, and came into the world with biblical religion. There are two important characteristics of this biblical conception of the Divine Spirit which must be noticed; these are the *sensuousness* and the *manifoldness* of the conception.

So bloodless and pale and useless for all purposes of practical morals and religion have been many of the conceptions of the Spirit formed by theologians and philosophers, that one writer has been led to declare he would prefer to them the notions about God of a

North American Indian. But the biblical conception of the Spirit is characterized by concreteness, sensuousness, passion. This divine potency is not thought of as degraded by entering into nature, history, and the human soul. God, the Spirit, does not stand aloof in the Bible from the world or from man. His free and boundless spiritual energy enters ceaselessly into the commonest things of life. The Spirit is in nature, in flowers and grass, sun and moon and star, and in all cattle. The Spirit breathes life into the body He has moulded, walks and talks with man, moves upon and dwells in the human soul with a work of intellectual and moral quickening and purifying.

The work of the Spirit is exceedingly manifold; so the Bible teaches. Artistic skill, mental quickening, prophetic insight and foresight, poetic genius, sense for the supernatural in nature and history, as well as moral purifying, and that knowledge of the hidden mystery which Christ conveys and is, together with the gift to expound authoritatively the mind of Christ, and to show the inner relations and the applications of His Gospel,—all these and many more are the fruits of one and the self-same Spirit.

We can form no rational or tenable conception of inspiration except that of a transaction between persons Biblical inspiration is to be understood as a transaction between a personal Holy Spirit, on the one side, and, on the other, man as a finite spirit made in the image of the Infinite Spirit. Its nature and results will depend, therefore, upon the nature of both the parties to the great transaction. The author of inspiration, the

one who inspires, and the subject of inspiration, the one who is inspired, must both furnish the conditions of what really takes place between them. Just as, in all cases of spiritual communion of confidants and friends, the characters of both those communing are involved in the communion *between* them.

The constitution of man as a subject of revelation and inspiration must now be briefly considered. According to the true and ennobling conception of man, which the Bible teaches, he is a "spirit," created as such after the image of God.* The use which the New Testament makes of the word spirit, as applied to man, emphasizes his "personal life in its relations to God"; the *spirit* in man is "the organ for the intercourse of man with God." The Bible regards man as the subject of divine revelation and inspiration, because man is in fact, and by his divinely derived constitution, a spiritual being. Therefore God can put His Spirit in and upon him, can dwell with him in the Spirit, as cannot be done with material things or with the lower animals.

According to the teaching of the New Testament, also, Christianity is the imparting of spiritual life, the inspiration, of every believer. All Christians are inspired. Not to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in the human spirit is to be in the natural ("psychical") state; it is to be non-spiritual and not a Christian.† The nature of the Christian's soul determines, therefore, the character of the revelation and inspiration which he must have in order that he may be a "spir

* D. S. S., ii., p. 379 ff. † D. S. S., ii., p 383 f.

itual," as distinguished from a merely natural, man. With respect to that revelation of Christ which every Christian has by virtue of his Christian experience, the one law is this: *there can be no revelation accomplished except as the contents of the revelation become the contents of human consciousness.* Inspiration is a spiritual effect within the human spirit, a quickening and elevating and informing of this spirit; it must all necessarily take place in accordance with the constitution of the being in whom the effect takes place.

It follows from what has just been said that all the different faculties of human nature, as they are employed in the service of divine self-revelation and inspiration, must remain true to the fundamental laws of their being. Indeed, senses, sensibilities, intellect, and moral and religious powers, can be occupied in the process of revelation and inspiration only as they conform to these laws. The laws themselves are only the constitutional and indestructible modes of the behavior of the mind.

For example, it would be quite unwarrantable to claim that man's senses cannot be so quickened by divine inspiration as to become cognizant of realities that lie beyond the range of their every-day activities. There are certain rare experiences of almost all men which strongly suggest, if they do not prove, that the possibilities of intuition through the quickened and elevated operation of sense are by no means exhausted in these every-day experiences. But if the senses act at all in revelation, if the revelation be through a vision, for example, they must act as senses; they must act under

all those conditions of limitation which belong to the very constitution of sense. Now, all that the senses can make us aware of is, primarily, certain changes in our state which give to our minds the tokens that certain changes are going on in what we call material reality. To "see" God in a prophetic vision could never mean anything more than to have an experience in which some material shape was presented before the mind under such circumstances that the mind rightly inferred from it the divine spiritual presence and action. To "hear" God speak could never mean anything more than to have certain impressions as of a voice in the ear, which the mind could rightly attribute to a divine origin and to the intent of conveying some divine truth.

We note, further, that in the realizing of divine revelation and inspiration the faculties of man act together as a living unity. Revelation and inspiration do not result in the separation of certain powers, called "higher," from all the other powers, in such a way that the latter have no influence over the former. The inspired man is always a man with a brain and a body, with a characteristic experience and so a characteristic memory, with a certain attainment of intellect and range and quality of judgment. All the various so-called faculties or powers act and react upon each other in the living unity of the mind. Inspiration receives the whole man as its subject; it affects the whole man by the quickening and elevating influences which it introduces into the soul.

Yet the same two-fold nature which belongs to our consciousness of the world of sense belongs to the con

sciousness which the presence of the revealing and inspiring Divine Spirit develops in the human soul. The world of sense is for every man *his* world; it is in his mind; it is a perpetual reconstruction and achievement of his mental activity. All the modern study of the mind emphasizes this truth. Nothing which one sees or handles exists, as one sees or feels it, outside of the mind and in independence of the mind's conscious exercise of its powers. But for every one, on the other hand, the world of sense exists as a reality "*extra*-mental," outside of and set over against one's self. Somewhat similar is the case with that consciousness of God and of divine objects which the Bible represents revelation and inspiration as bringing to the soul.* So Christ represents the witness of His disciples to Himself as a two-fold witness: "The Spirit of truth . . . . he shall bear witness of me; and ye also bear witness" (John xv. 26 f.). Paul represents the spirits of the prophets as *in* the prophets, of course, but also subject to the control of the prophets, very much in the way in which some outside compelling power must be kept under or back (1 Cor. xiv. 32). In various places in the Bible the prophet is referred to as in conversation, by question and answer, with the *divine* presence *in* his soul.

The memory of man, too, is influenced by, and employed in, the work of revelation and inspiration,—but always according to its fundamental laws. The historical character of biblical revelation is dependent upon this truth; it is because men are capable of memory that

* D. S. S., ii., p. 401 f.

this revelation has its organic character. The unremembered portion of revelation is lost.

It has already been shown that the inspiration promised to the disciples of our Lord consisted largely in a divine influence upon their memories. The work of the "Comforter" was to bring the sayings and deeds of Christ to remembrance, and to teach the significance of what was thus remembered. All those higher and more glorious views which the inspired apostles had of Jesus and His work, after His death, arose in their minds upon the basis of what was remembered. That the Holy Spirit should exercise a purifying and quickening effect upon the memory of these men is as reasonable an exercise of His divine activity as any that can be imagined. And no effect could possibly be more important. The highest and holiest of revealed truths cannot be based upon a treacherous or falsified memory. But, on the other hand, the memory of inspired prophets and apostles was only human memory; it was therefore subject to those limitations which belong to memory as such.

The powers of reflection are also influenced by the work of inspiration,—and yet they too are influenced in accordance with their constitution as powers of the human soul. In all ages of the world, and among all peoples, wherever the Divine Spirit has given insight into the meaning of human experience, to certain selected and inspired souls, this gift has been made in connection with meditation, and with the painstaking exercise of the reflective powers. We have already seen how true this was in the case of the Old-Testa-

ment prophets. They applied certain principles regarding the divine justice and grace to the circumstances and conduct of the men of their own time. In this way they had visions of what God would do in time to come in the carrying out of the same principles.

But especially like those fortunate inductions of great principles in which the geniuses of all ages have been so prominent, are the revelations of truth that come to the inspired mind. The flash of truth which breaks inward, when a great moral or religious truth stands, for the first time, clearly before the soul, is always worthy of being ascribed to a divine origin. The new truth that comes in this way is no mere summing-up of past experiences; it is a birth within the thinker's mind; it is a newly-created star, set in the firmament of thought. Indeed, so close is the relation which exists between the revelation and inspiration of the biblical writers and the revelation and inspiration of the discoverers of poetic or scientific truth, that the differences between the two concern chiefly the nature of the truth divinely imparted.

The important place of conscience in all revelation and inspiration admits of no debate. Inspiration is, more than anything else, the quickening and elevating of the moral consciousness. Conscience belongs, indeed, with its essential nature undestroyed by sin, to the natural man; it is the most impressive remainder and reminder of his divine spiritual nature. It forms the point of attachment, as it were, for the imparting of all moral and religious truth. All religious revelation is made to, and within, the moral consciousness.

But to regard the moral consciousness of man as a source of truth independent of God is utterly to mistake the nature of conscience, and the nature of revelation as well. For conscience is God's organ of revelation in man. It is impossible that conscience should act in isolation from the Divine Spirit; should it thus act, it would cease to be conscience at all.

We see, then, that the true subject of all inspiration, the producer of the biblical literature as sacred and inspired, is *man.* Nor is man made most fit for this office when rendered passive, like a pen to write, or a tablet on which to write, the dictated message from God. It is as a free spirit, a moral personality set over against the Divine Spirit, and yet exercising the submission of faith, that man becomes the subject of inspiration. His passivity is moral receptivity, the submission of faith. But faith is the highest and noblest form of activity which man can exercise toward God. Revelation does not consist in putting a truth, ready-made, as it were, and in itself out of all relation to the normal action of the faculties, within the human soul. It consists in communing with the soul so that the disclosure of the truth shall take place within it, in accordance with the proper and normal action of all its powers. Therefore, revelation involves inspiration; for inspiration is the quickening and elevating of the activity of these powers by the action of God's Spirit, present in the soul.

Therefore, the revelation and inspiration of each prophet and apostle will have its peculiar characteristics; and these characteristics will depend both upon

the circumstances amidst which each prophet and apostle lives, and also upon the personal character of each. The Old-Testament revelation and inspiration are characterized by the nature of the Hebrew mind. The revelation to, and inspiration of, the race, did not do away but accorded with the characteristics of the race. The Old-Testament writings are, therefore, just as truly Hebrew writings as they are inspired writings. But, on the other hand, those Scriptures, with all that they are and have done for the race, would never have existed at all, had it not been that God took in hand the native religious sense and religious sensitiveness of this people, and purified and elevated it by the influences of His Holy Spirit. For the same reason, the New-Testament writings have much the more universal and permanent character, as respects all their moral and religious truths and maxims. For the peculiar form of revelation which finds its sufficient record and vehicle in these writings is the personal manifestation of God, the Redeemer, in Jesus Christ.

Connected with the truths just stated is the individuality of biblical inspiration. Paul inspired is Paul still; and John is not by inspiration made more like Paul. For inspiration heightens rather than depresses the individuality of the person inspired. Now, it is mainly through these two persons, John and Paul, that the Christian Church has received its most mature views of the person of Christ himself. The Johannean view of Christ comes through John; the Pauline, through Paul. A consideration of the Bible as literature has already shown us that all its books, in their

style of composition, show the individual characteristics of their authors.

The common Christian thought of the time has summed up a great variety of characteristics, peculiar to the collection of sacred writings known as the Bible, under the general term "inspired." The authority of the Bible in matters of Christian faith and conduct is thus, in common Christian thought, made dependent on its inspiration. Its use as a means of grace in daily living is connected with its quality of inspiration in somewhat the same way. Thus it comes about that what is most valuable in the Bible is in some sort made to rest upon the belief that it is an *inspired* book. Now, this close relation between the contents of our Christian faith and the conduct of our Christian life, on the one hand, and the inspired character of the canonical writings of the Old and New Testaments on the other hand, is a valid relation. The question, What is the Bible? is indeed far more comprehensive than the question, What is the nature of the inspiration of the Bible? And if the Bible were shown to be in no special manner inspired, it would still retain its unique importance and value in the religious development of the race. But the inquiry into the nature of biblical inspiration is of so much importance in understanding the nature of the Bible that it requires at this point the following summary of points already established.

1. Inspiration, in the primary and only strictly appropriate meaning of the word, applies to persons, and to persons only. It is in a secondary and somewhat

loose meaning of the word that it can be applied to a writing, or to a collection of writings into one or more volumes. Books and writings are, in themselves, mere paper and ink; they can no more be inspired than can stocks and stones. But by a legitimate figure of speech we may regard as inspired the expression of those truths which are uttered by inspired men. Now truths designed for communication to others must be expressed, either orally or in written form.* Hence, in a more remote and loose yet legitimate way, we may speak of writings as inspired. An inspired writing is, accordingly, a writing that records and expresses the truth which has been made known to some person when inspired.

But here it is necessary to state again a fact which cannot be too often repeated. The Bible itself, from the first verse in Genesis to the last verse in Revelation, does not contain a single word to encourage the opinion that any special kind of inspiration was given to its writers, in the act of writing, or to qualify them for writing. On the contrary, everything which the Bible actually does say discourages such an opinion. Sacred Scripture is inspired, in the specific meaning of the term, so far as—and only so far as—it is the product of the men of revelation.

2. Inspiration is an ethical affair. The insight which belongs to it is, in its highest form, the benediction which Jesus pronounced upon the pure in heart: "They shall see God." There are, to be sure, other conditions which control the distribution of the divine gift, be-

*D. S. S., ii., p. 466 ff.

sides the moral character of the person to whom the gift of inspiration is made. But the gift requires a moral preparation of heart; and it is realized in a quickening, elevating, and expanding of the moral intuitions and feelings.

3. Inspiration may be said to be "dynamical," as distinguished from what is mechanical, or from any merely constructive or regulative influence. Its general conception is that of a divine influence coming like breath or wind into the soul of man and producing a transformation there. But this is not to be interpreted as though the inspiration which produced the Bible ever became merely mechanical. Its authors are not to be spoken of as "notaries," "secretaries," "amanuenses," "pens," "reeds," "harps," or "writing-tablets," of the Holy Ghost. The influence *is* dynamical,—a divine force dwelling and working in the human soul. It therefore involves the highest activity of all the normal powers.

4. Ecstasy is not the principal, much less is it the sole, form of biblical inspiration. There are cases narrated in the Bible where the inspired state took the form of ecstasy. We are told, for example, of Peter: "He saw a vision in an ecstasy."* But this is not the universal form of the inspiration enjoyed by the men of biblical revelation; indeed, it is not the ordinary or typical form. Nor is ecstasy itself by any means confined to the devotees of biblical religion. It is rather a state which occurs with religious devotees everywhere and in all ages. Genuine inspiration may not be in-

* See Acts xi. 5, and comp. D. S. S., ii., p. 472 f.

compatible with the state of ecstasy. But this state certainly is very unfavorable to such inspiration as is needed to shape the contents of revelation so that they may be fixed in the form of writings. It is not, then, *the* inspiration of sacred *Scripture.*

5. The inspiration which produced the canonical writings of the Old and New Testaments displayed a great variety. There is variety of its modes and degrees, variety due to the historical circumstances in the midst of which it was imparted, and variety in the amount and proportion of the mental faculties involved. It is not all alike infallible dictation of revealed fact and truth, as the barren and foolish fable of the *post*-Reformation dogmatics held that it was. Some writings of sacred Scripture are adapted for laying the foundations of doctrine, and some are not suitable or wholly trustworthy for this use. The Gospel of John and the Book of Ecclesiastes are not alike in this regard. There are degrees of the divine insight which the biblical writers display, grades of the completeness and of the imperfection of the moral tenets which they convey. The Bible is a great organism of facts and truths. And—to employ a figure of speech used for this very purpose by the saintly Richard Baxter—the parings of the finger nails, or the clippings of the hair, are not alike worthy and valuable with the interior vital parts of the organism.

6. Inspiration has a marked effect upon the powers of utterance, but it is not "verbal" in the technical sense of the term;—that is, it does not consist in, or involve, the selection and dictation, by the Holy Ghost

himself, of all the words employed by the writers. That the inspired thought will manifest itself in the form of expression, we can have no doubt. The inspiration is, primarily, of the person, an effect divinely produced in the mind. But in order that the result of such divine inbreathing may be preserved and communicated, it must take the form of words. The character of the thought will, of course, influence the words in which it is itself expressed; and so, more particularly, will the state of feeling into which the mind is thrown by the inner communication from God of the thought.

The effect of inspiration is most naturally and certainly felt in the style of utterance employed by the inspired mind. The constitution and condition of all a man's faculties are concerned in the language which he employs. But the indwelling Spirit of God awakens, vivifies, broadens, and elevates the operation of all the faculties. Of necessity, therefore, the expression of what occurs in the life of the soul is correspondingly modified.

Nor can it be denied that the indwelling Divine Spirit may often suggest to the minds under its influence a new combination of terms, or a new use of a word, the better thus to give to future generations the ideas of God's revelation of Himself as the Redeemer of man. Thus the Apostle John, in the Prologue of his Gospel, may well be regarded as under the influence of inspiration in the meaning which he gives to the word "Logos" for the pre-existent Christ. And there are places in Paul's writings where he is obviously carried along on the full tide of his inspiration to utter

things that had a meaning much grander than he had himself ever clearly conceived.

7. Inspiration is not infallibility; and the claim that it guarantees infallibility of any kind must be most distinctly denied. Not a single claim to the ability to write *errorless* Scripture, whether with respect to historical, linguistic, geographical, or ethical contents of truth, exists in all the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

Nor can it be argued that the biblical writings must be infallible because they are inspired. For inspiration is no guarantee of perfect freedom from every kind of error. It is not the design of inspiration to produce such infallibility; its design is really far nobler and higher than this. Its design is so to quicken and elevate the powers of certain selected men of revelation that they may apprehend, in their length and breadth, in their height and depth, the truths of the divine redemption of man through Jesus Christ, our Lord. These truths are in no sense dependent upon, or jeoparded by, the fate of a tittle or a letter or a number or a word, or even by the truthfulness of a geographical or scientific statement made in accordance with popular belief.

8. In all inspiration, the exact place where the divine meets the human and is limited by it, as well as the precise mode of the operation of the Spirit, remains concealed and mysterious. But this does not render inspiration irrational, much less incredible. We have no means for telling in our ordinary Christian experience just where we are to draw a line in the working of our thoughts and emotions, and so say, "This is of

God, and this other is my own." It is not by the attempt to draw any such hard and fixed line that we best understand our relations with each other as human souls under divine spiritual influences. We know that our Christian thoughts and feelings are all our own, in the sense that they are all thoughts and feelings of our minds. Yet we firmly believe that every really true and good thought and feeling of ours is to be ascribed to God as the gift of His Holy Spirit dwelling in our souls.

Neither can we draw with confidence a mental picture of the precise way in which God operates spiritually upon and within the mind of man. We communicate truth to each other by visible and audible signs, such as the written or spoken word, the gesture, the look, the soft pressure or clinching of the hand, the embrace or lifting of the arms. But God's Spirit does not communicate truth to man simply as one standing outside of the finite spirit and putting the symbols of truth into their several physical forms, by bodily exertions of his own.

The supernatural is always vailed and concealed within the natural. Jesus compared it to the breathing of a wind that comes upon us, we know not whence, or as moving in what precise direction. We know only that we are being moved, and we believe that God is in the movement. So it is with all spiritual influences. To inquire too curiously into the exact mode of their operation is not wise; to discover this mode is not possible. But neither can we discover how it is that God has interiorly bound star to star by so-called force of

gravitation; or how by the mysterious impulses of light we are connected with the remotest of all the stars.

9. The inspiration which produced the biblical books is, *specifically* considered, the same illumining, quickening, elevating, and purifying work which goes on in the entire community of believing souls. That the Bible represents the case in this way, we have already seen to be an undoubted truth (see p. 96 ff.).

But the biblical inspiration is certainly, in important respects, unlike that which we may ascribe to the discoverers of truth, to the poets, geniuses, and great moral teachers of mankind, whose works lie wholly outside of the biblical circle. All inspiration is, indeed, from one and the same source; it is only the Spirit of God that "inspires" man, as we are now using the term. But the type of that spiritual influence which produced the biblical books has certain special characteristics. The special revelation which accounts for the biblical books was a historical process of the self-disclosure of God as the Redeemer of sinful man; and this process culminated in Jesus Christ. The special inspiration which accounts for these books was that inward spiritual movement which corresponded to the revelation, and which consisted in illumining, purifying, and elevating the thoughts and emotions of the religious community in which the revelation was made. The quickened spirit of the men of revelation came from the visitation and indwelling of God's Spirit; it was this inspiration which fitted them for their work.

There is abundant reason to believe that many other books were written by the authors of the canonical writ-

ings, and by other authors than they, which were as truly inspired as are the canonical writings themselves. Certain lost writings referred to in the Old Testament—for example, the Book of Jashar, the Book of the Wars of the kings of Israel and Judah—were as truly inspired as are the Book of Esther or the Books of Chronicles. There is no reason to believe that all the proverbs which are preserved in the writing of that name are inspired in a manner different from many proverbs not thus preserved. The lost epistles of Paul were as truly the result of the work of the Holy Ghost in their author as the epistles which have come down to us. The oral presentation of Christ and the Gospel by the apostles was as certainly shaped by divine influences as was their written presentation of the same truth. Otherwise the promise of Christ would not have been fulfilled; for this promise had its primary reference to the oral presentation of the Gospel.

The inspiration which produced the biblical books is, then, peculiar in this regard; the Bible as a whole is the result of that great spiritual movement which God began among the ancient Jews, as a believing community, and which He continued, in a higher degree and on a grander scale, in the early founders and teachers of the Christian Church. One grand spiritual movement sweeps, during the centuries of its history, through the whole organism of sacred literature. This movement is a decidedly peculiar affair; nothing like it is to be found elsewhere in all human history. Accordingly, no other book like the Bible, which results from this movement, is to be found in all literature.

But when we speak of the biblical inspiration, considered as a whole, as a special kind of unity, we do not mean to affirm that this inspiration has no degrees of excellence in its products, no varieties within the one kind. On the contrary, some of the biblical writings are inspired as others are not—as respects both degree and variety in the divine distribution of the one gift of the Holy Spirit. It is of little practical avail to tell the intelligent Christian that Ecclesiastes is as truly and infallibly inspired *to teach him moral and religious truth* as is the Gospel of John; or that the imprecations of some of the Psalms are as much the genuine fruits of the eternal Spirit as are the declarations of the divine justice and mercy to be found in Isaiah or in Romans. Whatever theory the Christian reader may be induced to hold, practically he will assume a vast difference in the value and authority of the different biblical writings. The early Church, although it quieted its Christian reason and conscience by resorting to the allegorical interpretation in a way impossible for us, nevertheless boldly made the required distinctions. Some of the New-Testament writings, being traceable to apostolic sources, were regarded as valid for establishing doctrine; others of these writings were not.

That general spiritual movement which resulted in producing an extensive class of inspired literature involved many kinds of minds, and employed these minds in various offices in the general work of forwarding the divine kingdom. Some were influenced to sing sacred songs; some to enact or record laws which presented the principles of divine justice and mercy in a concrete

form and in a manner suited to the needs of the age; some busied themselves with history. But some greater souls, filled by the Spirit with longings for the full salvation of the people of Jehovah, in their yearning hope looked forward into the future, and saw how this salvation would realize itself when the divine Messiah should appear to set up and extend the divine kingdom. In the very centre of the whole organism of revelation and inspiration stand the apostles of our Lord. These are the men selected by the personal call of Jesus himself, informed and trained by their familiarity with His person and history, and so gifted with the same Spirit which moves in the entire community that they above all others have an insight into the significance of God's revelation of Himself as the Redeemer of man by Christ. When, then, we call the Bible "inspired," or use it as an inspired book, we have no need to disregard these plain differences in its parts, but rather plainly to distinguish them.

CHAPTER XV.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE.

It is chiefly with regard to the power of the biblical books to teach us authoritatively what is true to think and right to do, that most inquirers feel an interest in the nature and extent of their inspiration. The question of the authority of the Bible must, therefore, be regarded as a question of supreme importance. In the face of historical facts and of the course of historical development, it cannot be claimed that either the establishment of Christian faith and character, or the foundation and life of the Christian Church, is dependent *absolutely* upon the authority of the Bible. For true Christian faith and character existed before the Bible; indeed the Bible is rather the product than the producer of such faith and character. Moreover, the Church was founded, and had proved its power to live and overcome the world, before the canon of the New Testament was formed.

The question of the authority of the Bible is, however, a most important question,—although not in precisely the way which is sometimes supposed. For its authority is not to be thought of as though it were chiefly directed toward the formation of an unimpeachable system of theological opinions. We are, indeed, sometimes told that theology should all be bib-

lical, all based upon the authority of the Bible. And it would have been well for the cause of theology and of the Christian Church, if the Bible had been more diligently and intelligently consulted by systematic theology. But if, by "the authority of the Bible," we mean its right to be made the undisputed basis of a system of Christian theology, we cannot claim that the most important thing to be done for the Bible is to establish this, its so-called "authority." In the highest sense of the word, *the "authority" of the Bible is its right to hold up before the soul the true picture of Christ, and the true conception of Christianity;* the authority of the Bible is also its right to command every man to repent and believe when he thus sees Christ, and to conform his life to the principles exemplified in this picture.

In order to understand the true doctrine of the authority of the Bible, it is necessary, first, to consider the relations in which the Bible stands to the Word of God and to the Church of God. Except as related to these, the Bible has no authority or efficiency.

What, then, we inquire, are the relations in which the Bible stands to the Word of God, so far as its authority depends upon these relations? It is only in so far as the canonical writings constitute or contain the "Word of God" that they have any authority. But all our investigation thus far has resulted in showing us most clearly that the canonical writings cannot be identified throughout—every chapter, verse, and word of them—with the Word of God. If, then, we say that the Bible *is* the Word of God, we can only speak thus

in a rather loose and figurative way,—in expression of a truth which may be better expressed by saying that the Bible *contains* the Word of God, or is the vehicle or communicator of the Word of God. By the "Word of God" must here be understood all those truths and facts of morals and religion which, when taken in their organic unity and regarded in their historical relations, give us the true history and essential ideas and principles of the divine self-revelation of redemption.*

Now, the propriety of making a distinction between the Bible and the Word of God has always been virtually admitted by the Christian Church. To charge this distinction with heresy, or regard it with suspicion, can only be due, in the case of honest inquirers, to ignorance of history as well as of the facts of the case. Even the Helvetic confession, which identifies the canonical Scriptures and the Word of God, declares: "At the present day this Word of God is proclaimed in the Church by those preachers who are legitimately called." That is to say, the proclaimed truth of the Gospel is the Word of God. Many of the greater confessions, however, expressly insist upon this distinction, as did Luther himself and the other great reformers. These all speak rather of the Bible as "containing," or "embracing," or "conveying" the Word of God.

It has been objected to the above-mentioned distinction that the difficulty of making it is very great. Let it be granted that, as a matter of course, it is difficult to distinguish throughout between the Word of God and the canonical Scriptures as embracing or contain

* D. S. S., i., p. 279, and ii., p. 496 f.

ing it, and that any devout and wise student would hesitate long before offering to go through these Scriptures and separate off from them just so much and no more as belongs to the true Divine Word; still it remains true that God has never seen fit to relieve men from the necessity, duty, and peril of making difficult distinctions;—true also, as has just been said, that the Christian Church has never really failed in some sort to make just this distinction. No reader of the Bible can make safe practical use of it without virtually introducing the same distinction.

Moreover, it can be demonstrated that any theory which *identifies* the very words of the canonical Scriptures, from beginning to end, with the eternal and infallible Word of God, itself requires the making of many difficult, and even impossible, distinctions. The reader who attaches extreme importance to the exact letter of every canonical writing, as being one and the same with the very Word of God, is in peculiar and constant peril; for he can never make with any certainty those very distinctions which (according to his own theory) are necessary for him in order to attain this Word of God.

Let the charge just made be verified in view of the following considerations. In the first place, the canonical Scriptures, in which the Word of God must be found, if at all, by every unlearned reader, consist of an English or other translation. How shall such a reader distinguish between the true and the false in the translation which he is reading? A single mistake in the work of the scholars who rendered the original He-

brew and Greek into the words of the English Bible will render the latter no longer available as, throughout, the infallible Word of God. Somebody, then, must make for this unlearned reader a large number of extremely difficult distinctions between accurate and false translations of a Hebrew or Greek text.

In the next place, the Hebrew or Greek text of the Bible does not itself exist in any one infallible form. Accordingly, in order that any such Bible may exist, as can be completely identified with the errorless Divine Word, somebody must infallibly make distinctions between the true original text and the false and corrupt texts that are prevalent. To make these distinctions without error is simply impossible; to make them at all is an extremely delicate and difficult task, which can be only measurably well accomplished by those very few persons who have cultivated a particular kind of scholarship. Moreover, these are distinctions, the making of which involves the whole texture of the biblical words,—every verse and sentence from Genesis to Revelation.

Suppose, however, that the pious but unlearned reader, who demands that his Bible shall save him the trouble and danger of making the distinction between it and the Word of God which it contains, has at last received from scholars his infallible English translation; how shall he use that translation so as to be of any service to him either in framing his faith or in guiding his conduct? Only by making a third kind of distinctions,—difficult and perilous distinctions. He must interpret this Bible. But interpretation implies the

making of many distinctions. Indeed it is far more difficult to tell precisely what is the meaning of every word and sentence of the canonical Scriptures than to distinguish, in a way quite sufficient to secure the purity of our Christian faith and practice, between these Scriptures and the Word of God which they contain. And it is an actual fact that those Christian persons who regard the Bible as identical throughout with the infallible Word of God, and who study it with that impression, as a rule make far more mistakes in the articles of faith they derive from it, and in the kind of conduct they support by it, than do those persons who do not hesitate to use their Christian freedom in distinguishing between the Bible and the Word of God. It is far more dangerous *not* to make the distinction between the Bible and the Word of God than to make it. It leads far oftener to heresy *not* to make this distinction than to make it. Indeed, nothing can be wider of the mark than the stinging arrows of accusation which those shoot out who think to guard the faith and escape difficulties simply by affirming that the Bible *is* rather than *contains* the Word of God.

It should also be said, in passing, that the Bible itself warrants and requires the making of this distinction. It never identifies that circuit of writings in which the facts and truths of God's revelation of Himself as the Redeemer are scripturally fixed, with the Word of God, which is the sum-total of those facts and truths regarded as revealing God. In the New Testament Christ himself is pre-eminently *the* "Word of God." The announcement of salvation through

Him, the Gospel of redemption, is also spoken of as being the Word of God. It is a word of "hearing," because originally delivered orally by the apostles as preachers of the word. It is a divine energy which acts like a seed in the human soul. It produces faith. Inasmuch as God spoke in old times, in sundry ways, to men by the mouths of His prophets, their messages are also called the "Word of God" to those to whom they were sent. And inasmuch as these messages convey the truth of the old covenant as preparatory for, and anticipatory of, the coming and kingdom of Christ, they may still be words of God to us and to all mankind.

But the inquiry is now raised and anxiously made: Who or what rule will teach me to distinguish between the Bible and that Divine Word which the Bible embraces and contains but is not identical with? If this inquiry means, Who or what rule shall make me *infallible* in making this distinction? then the reply must be: No such person or rule exists. It is not given to man to be infallible in making any distinctions of this sort. But, then, the possibility of error is even greater for the reader who holds the theory that the Bible *is* throughout the infallible Word of God. God has not attached the contents of Christian faith and the possibility of right Christian conduct to the infallible interpretation of an infallibly accurate set of letters and words. But if the inquiry mean, How shall I shape my faith and conduct so as more and more to conform it to that true Word of God to man which the Bible brings? then the answer to the inquiry is not a difficult one at all.

That the Bible does embrace and bring to men the Word of God as their Redeemer is one of those large general truths which have their evidence in the accumulated experience of hundreds of years and of millions of human beings. The history of the race, in its experience of the effects of the Bible, is a witness to this truth. Especially does the experience of the Christian Church in the use of the Bible establish the same truth. Every individual Christian may then go to the Bible in the conviction that he will find the Word of God as the Redeemer of man revealed there; every individual who actually does go there finds his own experience establishing more firmly this same truth. No truth of large general experience is better confirmed or more easily tested than this.

Yet again: How may the believer, who approaches the Bible with the conviction that it does indeed contain the Word of God, actually discern and appropriate this Divine Word? This is a question which the Bible itself is so constituted as to answer in the most satisfactory way possible. The canonical Scriptures, when studied as a whole in the light of the history and nature of each, but especially in the light of a Christian judgment illumined by the Holy Ghost, themselves show clearly what are their diviner parts. The Word of God which they embrace is *Christo-centric*. This our Lord and His apostles most clearly taught. The believer must begin to get his impression of what is the true Divine Word by sitting at the feet of Jesus Christ and of His apostles. They teach us that while "the Law and the Prophets"—that is, the entire Old-Testament dis-

pensation with its Scriptures—are only *until* John, there is not a jot or tittle of them which shall not be fulfilled; that the Mosaic enactments are as the A, B, C of religion, and some of them are beggarly elements, in themselves considered, but that they were given to the world to enable men to find their way to God in Jesus Christ. About this firm centre of distinctively Christian truth, the Word of God in Scripture organizes itself according as the diligent and intelligent study of the reader of the Bible is rewarded by the Spirit who teaches him through this Word.

It is also necessary, in order rightly to conceive of the authority of the Bible, that we should understand the relations in which it stands to the Christian Church. These relations are most intimate and important; some of them are relations of mutual dependency. The Bible and the Church; the Bible *of* the Church, and *for* the Church, and *to* the Church; and the Church using the Bible in the construction of its system of faith and in the building up of its religious life,—these are themes that closely concern our answer to the question, What is the Bible? The Church of which we must now speak is, of course, pre-eminently the Christian Church.

There is one great truth which underlies all the relations between the Bible and the Christian Church. The same Divine Spirit who, by His workings in history, gave to the world that Word of God as the Redeemer of men through Christ which the Bible contains, is the spiritual life of the Church which has Christ for its Lord and Head. Now, there is a sense in which the

Church is dependent upon the Word of God for its very existence. If by the Word of God we understand all those facts and truths which make God known as the Redeemer of man, and which work as a spiritual energy within man so as actually to redeem him, then we may say that, without this Word of God, there would never have been any Christian Church.

On the other hand, there is a sense in which the Word of God is dependent for its very existence upon the Church. It is through the inspired community of believers that God has made His Word of Redemption known, and their enlightened moral and religious consciousness is the only conceivable final test of the right of any alleged truth to be called by this sacred name. This relation of mutual dependency can exist between Church and Word, because one and the same Divine Spirit is the creator and life of both. Neither of these can be subordinated, absolutely, to the other. If the Bible were to testify to anything contrary to the deep, underlying experience of the Christian Church, regarded as constantly taught by the Spirit, the Bible could not be accepted as an authority for the construction of faith or the guidance of conduct. On the other hand, the moral and religious consciousness of the Church feeds upon, and shapes itself by, the Word of God as it is contained in the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The illumined conscience and reason of the body of believers discerns, appropriates, tests, and applies the Word of God. When considering the history of the canon we discovered that it was, in part, through the

discernment of this conscience and reason that the circuit of canonical writings was made what it now is. This is especially true, of course, of the particular Christian writings which, by the instinctive working of the consciousness of the early Church, were selected from the great body of similar writings existing at that time. In the same way was the distinction arrived at between books that are fit for the establishment of doctrine and books that are not. The Christian consciousness, the consciousness of the Church, discerns the Word of God. In and through it comes that "witness of the Holy Spirit" which Calvin and the other great reformers considered the chief testimony to the truth and authority of the Word of God in sacred Scripture.

The position just taken is to be very clearly distinguished from that which subordinates the Word of God to the moral and religious consciousness of the individual, or which issues in rationalism. The "reason" of which we now speak is not man's intelligence, his arguing or feeling faculty, regarded as independent of God and thus acting as a judge or critic of the Divine Word. The very existence as well as the exercise of the moral and religious consciousness implies the work of the Holy Spirit within the believing soul. The object of faith which stands before such a soul is the same object as that whose picture is objectively held up in the Bible. Our doctrine is, in substance, the old-time doctrine of Protestantism, the doctrine of the "testimony of the Holy Spirit" (*testimonium Spiritus Sancti*), with which the authority of churchly tradition was met and overcome. "It is certain," said Martin

Luther, "that the reason is of all possessions the pre-eminent, and of all things in this life the best." But, as he elsewhere also says: "Reason acts and serves the things of faith, not before but after faith. Reason, after it is enlightened by the Holy Spirit, serves faith; but without faith it blasphemes God."

What has just been determined about the relations existing between the Word of God and the Church applies to the Bible, because, and in so far as, the Bible embraces and contains this Word of God. The unity of the testimony from the moral and religious consciousness of the Christian Church and the testimony of the Word of God in the Bible constitutes the highest possible proof of the truth of Christianity. But in considering the actual, practical relations which exist between the Bible and the visible organized body of Christian believers, we have to remember that we are no longer dealing with *ideals*. The Bible, as we have it, is not the perfect and infallible Divine Word without admixture of faulty and temporary elements; nor is the Church the perfect and infallible organ of that Holy Spirit which was, nevertheless, promised to it and does actually dwell and work within it.

Now, it is a matter of undoubted fact that the Bible was dependent upon the Church for its existence; and that, in the order of history, the Church existed before the Bible. All the separate books of the Bible are the products of the activity of members of the believing community. These books are also the product of the spirit of the Church; the common spiritual life which animates the community has produced these books

So, also, is the Bible dependent upon the Church for fixing its limits as a collection of canonical Scriptures.

But, on the other hand, the Church is dependent, for its development, upon the Bible. The facts and truths of Christianity in their purity, freshness, and power,—while as yet they were uncorrupted by bishops, synods, and later authorities, and unmixed with the weak attempts at wisdom which characterized the writings of the Church Fathers,—became fixed in the writings of the New Testament. The great body of these writings came by apostles and apostolic men. It is as though the apostles were, by their pens and the pens of their disciples and helpers, proclaiming the Gospel to us.

When, then, the Church wishes to know what true Christianity is, whether as respects its great facts, or as respects the ideas and principles which Christ taught in person, or by His selected and commissioned followers, the Church must resort to the New-Testament writings. Here it finds the pattern and norm to which it must conform its own doctrine and life; because here it finds the faithful picture of original Christianity, the Christianity of Christ and the inspired apostles. These writings are also the *only* sources of such a pattern and norm. Thus it is through the Scriptures only, in a fixed and historical way, that Christ and the apostles become the permanent sources of truth and influence for the Christian Church. For the end of the Bible is never to be found in itself; its end is to be found in continually building up the Church of Christ.

Thus it is, also, that the Church is dependent upon the Bible for the purity of its doctrine and life, and for

its power of reform when it has departed from the original type of purity. If we look over the centuries since the Church was founded upon the apostolic word, and upon the faith in Christ, we find that the doctrine and life of the Church have largely varied according to its intelligent and faithful use of the Bible. The New-Testament writings have acted to steady the Church, as it were, and to give a fixed and definite form to its development, after the original and apostolic type. Many and wide have been the departures of the various sects, in certain places and ages, from this true apostolic type of Christian faith and life. For centuries, during which the Bible has been unused except by a few persons, or has been wholly unused, great corruptions and prevalent darkness have endangered the Christian life. But the power of reform, and the possibility of a return to the true type of Christianity, have existed in the appeal to that Word of God which the Bible contains and presents.

Once more, the Church is dependent upon the Bible for the development of its doctrine into the systematic exposition of its rule of faith and life. Many evil and perverted dogmas have built themselves up upon the assumed authority of sacred Scripture; but more and worse dogmas have been foisted in from without by neglect or violation of the truth of Scripture. The wrong ideas which have been derived from the Bible by an honest but mistaken interpretation of it are few in number compared with those which, arising from outside in the soil of philosophy or in practical tendencies or traditional authority, have tried to accommodate the

Bible to their ends. Moreover, as the science and art of interpretation are improved, and thereby students of the Bible come to know more accurately what its teachings really are, many of the conflicts which have arisen between the moral and religious consciousness of mankind and the alleged teachings of the Bible, cease to take place at all. The more critical and historical examination brings to light the alleged deficiencies of the Old and New Testaments, the more conspicuous become the splendor and the peerless value of that real and spiritual truth which it is their mission to present and maintain.

And now, in view of those relations in which the Bible stands to the Word of God and to the Church of God, we are prepared the better to deal with the question of the nature, sources, and limits of its authority. The nature and sources of the Bible's authority are best shown in the service which it renders by holding up before men the true *object of faith.* All faith and knowledge require an object; so-called faith, that has no ground in objective reality, is credulity or superstition. All religious faith and knowledge require some presentation of God as a person, standing in personal relations, and ready to hold personal communication with the human soul. It is true that religion has one of its roots in obscure feeling,—the sense of want arising from weakness, of dependence, of need born of sin. But in order that religious faith may affirm itself in accordance with man's rational nature, it must define its object. On what manner of One do I depend? Who is it that will meet my wants and needs? What shall I

make, not only the undiscerned end of my blind groping, but the object of intelligent and loving trust? These questions are, if possible, especially pertinent in the case of the Christian religion as compared with other forms of religion. For Christianity is especially an historical religion,—a religion that implies an historical self-disclosure of God. Moreover, this process of divine self-disclosure culminates in an actual person, whose existence and words and deeds are matters of verifiable fact. So, then, the Christian faith must ground itself in a person actually and objectively presented to men at the end of a course of history which prepared the way for him, and as himself having a history terminating in his death and resurrection.

Now no other claim to authority which the Bible can present at all equals in strength and persuasiveness the claim that comes from its being the only source from which we may derive the true picture of the object of Christian faith. As it holds up before me this object, it says to me, with all the authority of the Christ himself: "This is he whom God has offered to you as the Redeemer and teacher and Lord of your soul. Hear him." The authority of the Bible thus becomes the authority of that which brings to me my Redeemer and Lord. It is the Bible which—to borrow a word from philosophy—gives "objectivity" to faith. It grounds faith in the objective presentation of Christ as He was actually present upon the earth, the divinely commissioned and authoritative redeemer of mankind.

The nature of the authority of the Bible will also be the clearer if we consider the nature of all authority,

and especially of such an authority as the Bible is fitted to exercise. There is an authority of compulsion, such as the earth exercises over the bodies suspended near its surface to draw them down when their supports are taken away. But this is, more properly speaking, blind physical necessity and not authority at all, as the term applies to rational and free human beings; neither is it as the master exercises authority over his horse or his slave that the Bible has authority over us. *Its authority expresses the right which the highest moral and religious truth has to satisfy the reason and to bind the conscience of man.* For the Bible, like the Lord whom it presents to us, desires an intelligent and willing service. The time when the word of the Lord came to men in a system of legal and ceremonial ordinances was finished with the old dispensation. But now men are commanded to repent, believe, and accept the Gospel. It is as presenting this true and authoritative message, offering God as the Redeemer of man in Christ on condition of repentance, faith, and the obedience of Him, that the Bible is an authority for us.

But the very nature of revelation, and of all religion as based upon revelation, is such, that a strictly demonstrative form cannot be given to its truths. We cannot prove the authority of the Bible as we prove the propositions of geometry or the laws of physics. It is a mistake, also, to suppose that the chief support to this authority comes from any evidence—such as the miracles or the remarkable predictions of the prophets—which lies apart from the truths themselves, and from the experience of men in accepting and applying them. The

truth that Christ is actually the Redeemer of mankind, which He is presented as being in the Bible, and therefore the conclusion that the biblical presentation of Him, and its accompanying commands, are indeed authoritative, is a truth which must be evinced, as accordant with reason and conscience, in a certain kind of experience. The Bible, as presenting and enforcing this truth, is a book of authority. Its authority is shown in the appeal which it makes to reason and to conscience, and in the experience which follows hearkening to the appeal, with all which this involves.

All that we have hitherto learned in answer to the inquiry, What is the Bible? proves, however, that different parts of the Bible possess entirely different claims to authority over us. This fact does not admit of denial. However it may be denied in theory, it is always affirmed and acted upon in practice. *Practically*,—that is, for the purpose of forming his faith or shaping the religious life,—no one puts an authentic teaching of Christ concerning the truth of salvation on a level with the legends about Samson or the trivialities of Numbers and Chronicles. Everybody now admits that the ritualistic ordinances of the Mosaic law, with its minute provisions about garments and washings, etc., have no authority over us. Even those who will not admit that there is any moral imperfection in the most violent of the imprecatory Psalms, or in the exterminating wars of Israel, do not hesitate to exhort us to bless God and our fellows and our own souls in the words of the Psalter, while refraining from an appeal to these imprecatory Psalms or exterminating wars, as authorizing

as minutely and awfully to curse and exterminate our enemies, together with all belonging to them,—even their children and their cattle.

The principle that the authority of different parts of sacred Scripture is different, both in kind and in degree, admits of a striking and clear illustration in the case of the biblical histories. We may speak of the "authority" of the historical contents of the Bible in two meanings of the word. In one sense of the word, we must say that the authority of the biblical history is precisely such as belongs to all authenticated history. Some of this history can claim a position of first rank as respects its authority, in this sense of the word, but some of it occupies a less exalted position of authority.

Even the Evangelists teach the history of our Lord with somewhat different degrees of authority. The authority of John, as an apostle and eye-witness, is higher than that of Luke, who, as he frankly informs us, got some of his material at second hand, and under a certain risk of mistake arising from this fact. But the historical authority of each of the Evangelists is much above that of the writers of the narratives of early Genesis, or of Numbers, Judges, and Chronicles. In general, the history of the New Testament is more authoritative, because more obviously authentic, than much of the Old-Testament history. The New Testament has the high historical authority of a primitive document composed by honest and competent witnesses.

In a more important meaning of the word "authority," not all of the historical writings of the Bible have a perfectly equal authority. For nothing is more cer-

tain than that the biblical revelation is an historical revelation. Much of the biblical history is, therefore, an essential or important part of the biblical revelation. For example, the death of Jesus is an historical fact; and so is His resurrection. But both these facts are also immensely important and even essential factors in the biblical self-disclosure of God as the Redeemer of man through our Lord Jesus Christ. They have, therefore, an authority in the appeal which they make to the Christian reason and the Christian conscience with respect to their moral significance and value as facts. Contrast, for example, the "authority" of the resurrection of our Lord with that of the alleged resurrection of the unknown man in 2 Kings xiii. 21, by touching the bones of the prophet Elisha. The life of the Church is built upon the fact of Christ's triumph, as the Risen One, over death, corruption, and Hades. The consciousness of the Church testifies to a constant communion with Christ as the Risen One, the ever-living Saviour, Judge, and Advocate of His people, and of the world. It is quite impossible by any theory of the inspiration of the Bible to give to the resurrection of the unknown prophet in 2 Kings any authority at all approaching this. Any theory which does not recognize the wide difference in the two cases is an artificial and untenable theory.

For the Christian of to-day we may say, therefore, that it is the Word of God which Christ spoke, and is, which gives authority to the Bible, according to the relation in which its different parts stand to that word It has, accordingly, been truly said by a modern theo-

logian,* that "the certainty of the authority of sacred Scripture we derive from Christ; . . . . it is not true, on the other hand, that Christ possesses for us a divine and truly certain authority by reason of sacred Scripture." Indeed, as we have already seen, we may in certain cases oppose the authority of Christ to that of some parts of the Bible itself. So Luther said: "If the Scripture is urged against Christ, then I urge Christ against the Scripture." And no Christian can ever afford to contradict or suppress the plain teaching of the indwelling Spirit of our Lord, in His effort to justify the infallibility of some passage in the Old-Testament law or history. What Christ says, for example, about the forgiveness of enemies cannot be lowered in order to save the authority of an imprecatory Psalm.

Where, then, shall we find some fixed and central place of authority, to which we may bring all the other teachings of the Bible itself, as well as by it frame our conceptions of what a Christian ought to believe, or think, and strive to do? Such a place is the word of Jesus Christ in the gospel. We are both able and obligated to receive all the Word of God in the Bible as having an authority relative to Him. This word, however, does not simply comprise what He himself said; it comprises also what He himself did, and what He himself was, in all the significance of His personality and His mission.

But in the New Testament we have also the apostolic word expanding and explaining and applying the word of Christ. The apostles were the ones selected

* D. S. S., ii., p. 577.

commissioned, and inspired for the very purpose of giving to the Church, in such form as that the Church could be founded for all ages upon it, the Word of God that our Lord both taught and is. This apostolic word, therefore, is an authentic and authoritative exposition of who Christ is; and of what He has done and will do for men; and of what He requires of men in order to be saved, and to become His true followers.

The non-apostolic authors of the New Testament have an authority which is more indirectly derived, and which is always relative to, and tested by, the authority of Christ and the apostles. And of the entire Old Testament we must say, that its authority is relative. The authority to be assigned to its different parts depends chiefly upon the relation in which they stand to the teaching of Christ and the apostles. The Old Testament, as a whole, has authority for the Christian only as a substantially authentic record of that preparatory history, and as a store-house of those religious ideas, which all looked forward to Christ.

The opposite of the view just given, touching the origin and limits of the authority of the Bible, leads to theorizing which is inconsistent with the facts, and to practices that are inconsistent with the highest and safest religious life. Let the theory once be held and acted upon, that the Bible is a collection of infallible writings all alike authoritative over belief and conduct; and what follows? Either there must be evasion and disingenuousness in working out the theory, and applying it to particular cases, or else there must be wide departure from the pure Christian standard of faith and life.

We are not, however, required to be first Jews and then Christians. Practically, true Christians agree that the worldly-wise maxims of Proverbs, the cruel and vengeful wishes and acts of Old-Testament saints, whether commended or not by those who recorded them, the principles which underlie some of the Mosaic ordinances concerning the relations of the sexes, and concerning the treatment of private and public enemies, are not authoritative for us. They are done away, superseded, as we say, by the Christian maxims and principles. But to admit this, is to admit the imperfection, judged by the moral standard, of the earlier and cruder portions of sacred Scripture, and the existence of kinds and degrees of authority possessed by the different thoughts of Scripture. Where then shall we find *a standard* which we may safely apply to all of sacred Scripture, as well as to our own faith and life? We shall find it in the objective word of Christ and the apostles as revealing to us God, the Redeemer of sinful and needy man.

But it will at once be seen that the construction and application of this standard for all the authority of the Bible requires the activity of Christian minds, of the reason and conscience belonging to living, self-conscious, and free human beings. For, as has already been said, the authority of the biblical moral and religious principles is not like the reign of physical law over material things. The spiritually illumined Christian reason and conscience is the so-called "Christian consciousness." This Christian consciousness has an authority of its own; its authority cannot be contravened

by the authority of the Bible; but the authority of Christian consciousness is the chief witness for the authority of the Bible in all matters of Christian faith and conduct. To consider the so-called "Christian consciousness" as capable or desirous of setting itself up as an independent judge or critic of that word of Christ and the apostles on which it is itself founded, is utterly to mistake its nature. But when it criticises certain opinions, and maxims, and actions, relating to matters of morals and religion, which appear to have the credit of certain Old-Testament writers in their favor, it may be doing precisely what it is designed and fitted to do. We recognize Moses, for example, as an inspired prophet and lawgiver of Israel; we exalt his mission in his own nation, and in respect to the entire revelation of biblical religion, to a high and conspicuous place. But if we point out that some of the Mosaic ordinances testify to relatively low moral and religious conceptions, on the part of both people and lawgiver, we only do what the revelation of the higher ideal law in Christ has empowered us to do. And we have the authority of Christ to warrant us in regarding the authority of Moses as not absolute, as not like Christ's authority.

The work of the Christian consciousness in surveying the biblical writings is not, however, distinctively or chiefly a critical work; it is rather a work of receiving, approbating, and applying the truths of Scripture, the Word of God in the Bible. Hence the Reformation doctrine of the "witness of the Spirit" to Scripture,—a doctrine already more than once referred to.

"The Holy Spirit," says one writer, "is to-day testifying in us concerning the divine authority of Scripture." Substantially the same view of the relation of the believer's inner experience to external authority is expressed in the writings of Luther and Melanchthon, of Zwingli and Œcolampadius. Calvin, also, regarded the Christian consciousness as affording the one chief witness to the truth of the Bible. It was to it—to this spiritually illumined reason and conscience of the believer—that the apostles appealed for the testing and approbating of the word they preached.

It is one of those strange facts which the history of the Christian Church discloses that the denial of the power and authority of the Spirit in the believer has frequently arisen, alike from unchristian rationalism, on the one hand, and from *hyper*-orthodoxy, on the other hand. Rationalism makes light of the authority of the redeemed consciousness. It refuses to recognize the supernatural principle which abides—the gift of the Holy Ghost—in the Church, the community of believing souls, as the possession of every true believer. It is deaf to the promise of our Lord that this gift should certainly be made,—that He would send the Spirit, if He went away from the earth. In the supposed interests of a reason that shuts itself up against the promised divine illumination, rationalism opposes the testimony of an enlightened and expanded reason. But repeatedly in the course of history has a certain type of "orthodoxy"—which is, indeed, when judged by the Bible itself and by the faith of the Church catholic, *not* orthodox—reached the same conclusion

There is a blind and indiscriminating worship of the letter of the canonical writings. Its controversy is born in fear and feeds on fears. It cannot trust the Spirit of God to teach the believer in Christ, even when the believer follows the example of his Lord and the apostles, as to what in these writings is the truth of God's Word.

But he who lays the foundations of the authority of Scripture in the infallibility of the letter of Scripture, lays them in the most insecure of all positions. For he must at once answer the question: How are we to guarantee the infallibility of this letter? And if he undertakes to answer this question by the assumption that the letter of Scripture *must* be infallible (a leap of faith so-called), he finds that this assumption has no sure basis either in the claims of Scripture or in the facts of Scripture. But if, on the other hand, he undertakes to show by historical and critical researches that the letter of Scripture *is* infallible, he has not secured faith in the authority of Scripture, whether he succeeds in his undertaking to his own satisfaction, or not. For if he succeeds, he has only succeeded in laying the foundations of faith in an historical and critical contest about probabilities. He has opposed to the witness of the Spirit the conclusions of his own petty historical and critical studies.

How, then, shall we conceive of the authority of the Bible? We answer: This authority is objectively founded in the fact that the Bible gives to us the true picture of Christ and the authentic presentation of His personality and doctrine, as the divine Redeemer. It

also gives us the apostolic exposition and application of this word of Christ. It also gives us the history of those facts, and of the development of those ideas, which in times preceding Christ prepared for, and anticipated His coming. To this Word of God the Spirit of God in the believing community witnesses. In other words, the truth of salvation, as it is brought to the redeemed mind in that objective Divine Word which the Bible contains, is discerned and approbated by the redeemed mind. It is in these facts of history and of experience that the authority of the Bible is grounded.

And now we may inquire into the relations in which the Bible stands to the so-called Christian "rule of faith." Upon this point we must listen to the voice of history. This voice teaches us, in the first place, how it was that the Christian Church came to regard the Bible as containing or furnishing the "rule of faith." Of course, since the Christian Church preceded the New-Testament Scriptures, it could not have been originally dependent on those Scriptures for its norm, or rule, as to what it is right for a Christian to believe. Nor, in so far as its faith was distinctively *Christian* and not Jewish, could it rely, for its rule, upon the writings of the Old Testament.

Moreover, for several centuries after the New Testament was written, the "rule of faith" for Christians was not considered to consist simply of the writings of the New Testament. For the early Church the rule of faith was the apostolic word, whether delivered in writing or by tradition. As an historian of the Church has truly

said:* "A wide-spread agreement over the principal tenets of this faith (that is, the faith of the Church as indicated in its rule of faith) appears much earlier than over the canon and contents of sacred Scripture." It would scarcely be overstating the truth to say that the Church's rule of faith had originally more to do with fixing the canon of the New Testament than the New Testament had to do with fixing the Church's rule of faith.

It is not to be supposed, however, that the early Church thought of, much less discovered, any contradiction between the teachings of the New Testament and its own rule of faith. On the contrary, the rule of the faith of the Church, the "tradition of the Church," and "the Divine Scripture," were thought of as two ways of arriving at one and the same authority of revelation. The early Church, however, did not in theory or in fact derive its rule of faith solely, or chiefly, from the Bible. And, indeed, it did not need to do so. The apostolic word had been proclaimed in the ears of men still living, or only a little while ago dead; there was as yet no time for its substantial corruption.

But it is perfectly plain that the relations in which the Christian Church stood to the Bible, with respect to the Church's rule of faith, could not remain unchanged as the centuries of its life went on. As the certainty of other forms of delivering the uncorrupted and complete word of Christ and the apostles became less and less, the Bible became more and more the only trustworthy source of that word. Thus history went on to fix certain relations between the Church and

* Hase; compare D. S. S., ii., p. 591 f.

the Bible. When these relations became obscured and perverted, as happened during the ages preceding the Reformation, the deliverances of the Church, through her officers or her councils and synods, came to be made of like authority, or even in fact of superior authority, to that of the Bible itself. It was in opposition to this view that Protestantism proclaimed its fundamental tenet,—the Bible gives us, as respects matters of Christian faith and conduct, the *only* rule of faith. This amounts to answering the question of the inquirer into, or believer in, Christianity,—"Where shall I go to find out what I ought to believe and do as a Christian?"—by saying: "Go to the Bible for your rule of faith and conduct; for *it is the rule*, and there is no other."

No rule of faith lies ready-made in the Scriptures, as it were, but every rule of faith must be constructed from the Scriptures by the exercise of an enlightened Christian reason and conscience. The different formulas and symbols of the different sects of Christendom, as well as the few great historical creeds which almost all of these sects unite in holding, are *ready-made* rules of faith. They are constructions of what is sometimes called the "Christian consciousness."

In the Bible itself, however, there exists no set of statements summing up in a systematic way, with any attempt at completeness, all that it is essential or important for a Christian to believe and do. It follows, then, that the rule of faith must be made up from the Bible instead of being taken ready-made from the Bible. For it does not exist ready-made *in* the Bible, that it may be taken *from* it. But how shall this rule

of faith be constructed? Its construction involves the activity of the "Christian consciousness." In other words, the enlightened reason and conscience of believers must discern, and harmonize, and mould, each to the other, those truths, taught in historical fact or doctrinal statement, which the Bible contains, and which constitute the Word of God.

On the other hand, we have already seen abundant reason for holding that, in the Bible, God has given, to the Church and to the world, the permanent and authoritative "norm," or type, for constructing the sure rule of faith. The rule of faith is indeed here given in the historical connection of revelation itself; its form is not dogmatic. The Bible presents Jesus Christ as an historical personality in His true setting of historical circumstances; it does not provide a systematic statement of all the doctrines that are involved in this personality. But the New Testament also gives us the results of apostolic reflection upon the meaning of His personality and of His history. And, furthermore, the Old Testament gives us the history of those facts and ideas in which God made Himself known to Israel as their Redeemer, and as the Redeemer of mankind through them. Inasmuch as, and in so far as, the Bible contains the word of our Lord, of His apostles, and of other inspired servants of God, respecting the divine self-revelation in redemption, the Bible is the rule of faith.

It is also true, that the truths of the Bible in some sort organize themselves into a kind of system of fact and truth—"a rule of faith"—as soon as we put our-

selves into the right central position from which to regard them. This central position is to be found in the person, and word, and work of Christ. The biblical pattern of the rule of faith refers everything to Him, as the bearer to man of God the Redeemer. But this rule of faith, thus given in the Bible, is given only as a *norm*,—a conditioning germ, a fixed standard, type, or pattern, of what the Christian must believe and do. It is designed and adapted for development. The Church uses all her experience, as guided, encouraged, rebuked, chastened, and enlightened by the Divine Spirit, in building up her system of doctrines, in constructing the rule of faith. But the Church builds soundly, builds what will stand, only as she builds in accordance with this indestructible norm, or type. To discern what this is, and the better to conform to it, and the more to develop her faith and life in accord with it, she resorts ever afresh to the Bible, and to the unchangeable Word of God which is found therein.

Once more, we see that only a secondary and subordinate, and yet a real, authority may be claimed for the work of Christian reason and conscience in constructing the rule of faith. The individual believer, and the entire Christian Church, stand in an attitude of faith and receptivity toward the word of Christ and of the apostles. The Lord himself is the only teacher of absolute authority, and He has bidden His followers "call no *man* rabbi." But the same Lord also selected the apostles, commissioned them, and inspired them by the Spirit sent from the Father, to be the preachers of the Gospel in its purity and power, and the founders of the Christian

Church. He called and equipped them; and He so placed them in history, that they might hold a perfectly unique position in the development of the doctrine and life of all believers in Him. Therefore, we receive also the apostolic word in matters of Christian faith and practice,—remembering the promise of Christ to lead them (progressively) into the truth (*the* truth, pre-eminently, which He himself taught, and was). The whole Christian Church learns of Christ and the apostles as the authoritative exponents of the fact and truths of the divine self-revelation of redemption.

Now, it is not as Jews and Jewish literalists or ritualists, but as taught of Christ and the apostles, and as led by the Holy Spirit to the higher Christian point of view, that the communion of believers receives and estimates the entire body of canonical writings, especially the writings of the Old Testament. It receives, for example, as its authoritative rule of life, different principles and maxims from those contained in the Mosaic law with respect to marriage and divorce, with respect to meats and tithes, the keeping of ceremonial enactments, and the observance of the Sabbath. It holds, on the authority of Jesus Christ himself, the power to criticise and test the views which the Old-Testament saints held regarding the nature and development of the divine kingdom; and it, therefore, knows in what respect certain expectations of the prophets, touching what Messiah would be and do, were fragmentary and mistaken. It relies upon the same authority for its belief that the grounds and conditions of salvation are such as they are given in the *Christian* religion, and

not in all respects such as they appeared to be to the *Jewish* religion.

A development of Christian doctrine is also possible for the Christian Church, because the Church has a growing experience of the truth of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—although always in dependence upon, and submission to, the indestructible type of Christian faith and life given to it in the word of the Lord Jesus and His apostles. For the same reason the Church is capable of self-purification. It has the law of its faith and life set for it in this Word of God; and to this law it may return, and conform itself anew so often as it has wandered. Thus, the teaching by which it has most steadfastly held, in all the centuries and places of its growth, represents its most true and real thought and life. The individual believer can always appeal, not only from the dogma of a particular sect to the word of Christ and of the apostles, but also from the dogma of a sect, held during this or that section of time, to the doctrine of the Church catholic as learned from a study of the unfolding of the Church's experience in history.

The Bible, therefore, addresses the reason and conscience of men with the highest authority which belongs to the kind of truth which its writings present. It thus becomes a divine voice, or Word of God, to man. And he who hears the divine voice, who accepts the divine word, thus brought before him, has an experience awakened thereby, which forms for him the highest proof that the authority to which he has listened has a right to be accepted and obeyed.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

We are now in a position to give an answer, founded upon both critical researches and Christian consciousness, to the question which was proposed at the beginning of this book,—the question, namely, What is the Bible? In reply we have told the story of how these writings came to exist in literature, and of what are the literary and other more obvious characteristics which distinguish them from differing kinds of literature. We have described that process by which the Church of God gathered these writings together and gave to the collection, as a whole, the peculiar significance which it has as pre-eminently sacred and inspired. Thus the question, What is the Bible? has been answered in the plain, historical, or—as it is sometimes said—the "inductive" way.

But the experience of the Church of God, especially both the historical and the present experience of the Christian Church, enables us to add yet other even more important elements to our description. The Church finds in the Bible—and the individual believer finds in it—*the* book, pre-eminently, of the true faith and life. The Christian faith is grounded upon those great facts and truths which present God as the Redeemer of man through Jesus Christ. The Bible is the book, the only

book, which presents these facts and truths in an authentic, original, and authoritative way. This is so especially because it alone brings to us the word of Christ and the apostles, telling to us and to all men what is true for the Christian to believe, and right for him to do. That is to say, *the Bible is the book which brings to the Church, and to the world, the true word of God in redemption from sin.*

We return then, in closing our inquiry, to the same point of view with which the investigation began. The unlearned but devout believer dearly prizes the practical use which he makes of the Bible in enlarging and confirming within himself the true Christian faith, and in building up the true Christian life. He wishes to have the question, What is the Bible? answered in such manner as to work no harm to the efficiency of this use. It is for this reason that he shrinks from those inquiries which modern biblical study suggests, and from those conclusions to which it seems to compel its devotees. But the very inquiry, which has just been finished, into the origin and nature of the biblical writings, has led us to place the emphasis almost wholly on the service which these writings render in bringing the historical revelation of God, as Redeemer, before men in an authentic, scriptural form. It has been seen that no discovery of modern biblical criticism detracts from or diminishes the power of the Bible to perform this service.

What then is the highest final purpose of Holy Scripture in its relations to the individual believer? It is to serve as a helpful means of his actual redemp-

tion. The most important part of the general inquiry, What is the Bible? is therefore left for every man to answer for himself in a practical way. What is the Bible *for me?* It is chiefly *what I make it to be* by an intelligent, devout, and consistent use, in the shaping of my Christian faith and conduct. The biblical writers themselves are, to all appearance, interested in the very same practical use of the Divine Word which interests the believer of to-day. They are interested in having the truth which they present accomplish a real and essential spiritual work in the human soul. They and we together are seeking to use the biblical expressions of truth as a means of faith, hope, and love.

The matter of main import for all inquirers is, accordingly, that the Bible should be in fact so used as to begin and educate the redeemed life of the soul. The only way to secure this most important aim of the Bible's use is actually to govern and shape the life of the soul by that pattern of the redeemed life which the Bible presents. Would you have the canonical writings prove themselves to you as being, in reality, what they claim to be? Then make use of them as your counsellor and guide. In other words, the Bible fulfils its supreme purpose when it becomes a means of grace; and it is in the service which it renders as a means of grace that it most convincingly justifies its claim to be regarded as the work of the Spirit of God.

But the Bible is not a fetich to be worshipped, or a despot to be slavishly obeyed. Through it we learn of God and are the more induced to give God the glory. From it we learn those maxims of right living, and that

picture of God, Christ, and duty, which the freedom of faith rejoices to accept. The Bible as a means of grace does not fetter reason, but informs and guides it; does not bind its loyal reader to an unhesitating assent to its letter. It tells us that, if the letter killeth, the spirit maketh alive. It bids us keep with regard to itself its own maxim, to prove all things and hold fast that which is good. But it also furnishes us with the means of discerning and testing the supreme good by bringing all that it itself contains, and all other religious teachings, to the standard of the infallible truth which Christ teaches, and is.

The highest use of the Bible as a means of grace, however, does not belong to any one person as though he were merely an individual isolated from the common spiritual life of the religious community. We have seen that the Bible is of the Church and for the Church. Its use is a churchly affair. As its words are recited by the appointed officer of Christian assemblies, or by the assembled company of all believers themselves, they show the power of the Divine Word which is in them to comfort and nourish and inform the spiritual life. Moreover, the interpretation of the Bible, and the formation of the rule of faith upon the basis of those facts and truths which are divinely taught in the Bible, is a function of the Church.

But, furthermore, the experience which the Christian reader has in the use of his Bible reflects more light upon its nature and origin as divine. This is an experience of being met and blessed by the Holy Spirit in the use of the Bible. Such an experience is, doubt-

less, one of the most convincing and effectual of all the reasons found for believing Holy Scripture to be from God. Inevitably, every one will judge of the book very largely by what it does for him. The Bible is *for* a man what it is *to* him. And yet this thought must not be pressed in such a way as to destroy or weaken the force of the thought just preceding. This experience of mine with the Bible is indeed *my* experience; but it is also an experience in which the great multitude who compose the invisible body of believers are in complete *accord with me.*

If any believer will intelligently and faithfully use the Bible as a means of grace, he may grow by this use in the manifold graces of the Christian life. In the Bible he may find, in every emergency, a serviceable portion for his soul. When he knows himself to be in danger from cowardice and effeminacy, he may sound its call to the soldierly courage and endurance which so befit the true Christian life. When downcast, he may lift himself up in the light of its pages; and when exultant, he may find in them both sympathy and chastening for his joy. When he has sinned, it summons him anew to repentance and to the forsaking of sin. When sorrow and death are his lot, as they are the lot of all, he can use the words of mingled grief and consolation which were left on record by the inspired sufferers of other days. For here are the sword and the hammer, the cup of water and of medicine, the flower to cheer with its beauty, the bath to refresh, the whip to chasten and excite, made ready for the Christian's use.

There are even nobler uses of the biblical writings, which the intelligent and believing student of them may make, than any that are confined simply to the application of the words and truths to his own daily life. By the scholarly and comprehensive study of these pages he may rise to the highest and divinest points of view from which to behold the history and the destiny of the human race. For the Bible is the book of redemption, and its truths open before the mind the vistas that lead into the perfected divine kingdom. Prophets and apostles, but especially Jesus Christ himself, have rejoiced in their day to labor and suffer for the coming of that kingdom. They have foreseen the time of its fullest glory and power; and this vision has blessed them with the most benevolent and sympathetic joy of expectation. We, too, may see the new Jerusalem coming down from on high; but it is by entering in to the meaning of the highest ideas of the biblical writers that we are raised to this point of view. For in this book is foretold and promised the redemption of the race, the triumph of the kingdom that is to cover and possess the earth.

It was one of the many grand results of the Protestant Reformation, in its wide influence over literature, politics, and popular life, that it brought the Bible near to, and opened it before, mankind at large. The Bible then began to be, what it is destined more and more to become, the book of the race. It ceased to be buried in manuscript editions of the palaces and cloisters. The discovery of printing made it possible—and this in no indefinitely long period—to place a copy of it in the

hands of every man. In this wonderful era a strong spirit of unrest agitated the people. They craved light; they longed for change; they demanded help touching their relations to their rulers, to one another, and to God. This wonderful book, now brought out of the dead languages in which it was originally given to mankind, and translated into the vernacular of every people, and multiplied a thousand fold by the printing-presses, promised knowledge, relief, and peace.

The Bible, indeed, contains that truth which is best fitted to stimulate, guide, and satisfy the growth of man in intellectual vigor, and in the moral and religious emotions. The biblical presentations of moral and religious objects are wonderfully adapted to meet the needs of human reflection and feeling. The writers of sacred Scripture speak from God to the human mind and heart. Their language is indeed of a special kind, with the peculiarities of phrase, figures of speech, etc., which belong to a foreign land and a remote age. And yet it has universal elements in it; and it addresses the common mind and heart, the nature in which we all share.

For these and other reasons, the Bible will continue to become more and more the book of the race,—more and more a choice means of inciting, guiding, and informing the redeemed life of humanity. Many of its writings will indeed cease to be used in the future as they have been used in the past. The Old Testament will no longer be employed to feed the feeling of vindictiveness, to prove the rightfulness of slavery, polygamy, and the subordination of woman. The cosmogony of

Genesis will not always be taken as a description of the actual process of world-building in accord with all the details of modern scientific evolution; nor will the Song of Solomon be made, by a mystical interpretation, to stimulate and praise the love of Christ and the Church. All attempts will be surrendered to frame a theory inconsistent with, or independent of, the facts, and then to employ the Bible in accordance with the demands of the theory rather than with either the nature of the Bible or the more refined needs of the redeemed soul. But the Bible will thereby lose nothing of its efficiency or honor as the means employed by the Spirit in the distribution of grace to the individual believer and to all mankind. For its efficiency and honor as a medium of divine spiritual gifts do not depend upon its infallibility or its perfectness in all regards. They depend chiefly upon a very few simple but unchangeable facts and truths.

Man is in need of redemption, and either obscurely or more clearly recognizes his need. The Bible is the book which presents the facts and truths of redemption. It is destined, therefore, to become the book of the world; for it is the book divinely prepared and adapted as the instrument of redeeming the world through Christ. It is its supreme office, its crowning glory, to minister to the Holy Spirit in conforming man to the mind and life of man's Saviour and Lord.

APPENDIX.

RECENT CONSERVATIVE VIEWS OF THE ORIGIN OF THE HEXATEUCH.

It is a notable and instructive fact that little or nothing is being done by the advocates of the traditional theory to furnish a substitute for the extreme and so-called "destructive" views of the Hexateuch and of the origin of Old-Testament religion. When, for example, a work like that recently published by Rénan appears, its exaggerated statements are met with simply a blank and ineffectual protest from those few scholars who still believe that Moses was the author of the five books ordinarily called by his name. The contest between the old and the new opinions on this question of biblical criticism seems likely to follow a course like that taken by the contest over the adoption of modern views in astronomy. When the claim was first put forth that the sun is the centre of the solar system, and that the earth instead of the sun is in motion, it was treated by the "orthodox" theologians of the time with indignant denial as contrary to the obvious truth of revelation. To make such a claim was then considered a dreadful heresy,—a heresy, indeed, which the Church was bound to visit with all the penalties in her power. But the new scientific truth won its way; and in time the theologians who at first denied it, relapsed into enforced silence even

against the atheistic or naturalistic conclusions which some of its advocates wished to draw from it. Their zeal to maintain the existing orthodoxy in spite of new truth, had taken away their power to defend the real and important matters of faith, in consistency with this new truth. But other more reasonable and truth-loving theologians found out a way both to accept the truth of revelation and also to admit the fact that the earth moves. In like manner, at the present time, the advocates of the view that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch are rapidly being forced into the condition where they have nothing whatever to say to the facts which modern scholarship is disclosing; or if they say anything, they can only reiterate the opinion that the traditional view is alone orthodox and safe for the shaping of Christian conduct. Yet, in this case too, other biblical scholars are arising who are using their critical study to good effect in showing how the admission that Moses is not the author of the Pentateuch in no wise damages the foundations of faith.

In several places in this book the claim has been made that Christian scholars are almost unanimous in the opinion that the Hexateuch is a composite composition, an historical development, and therefore cannot have been the work of Moses. This claim of scholarly unanimity is sometimes disputed in the presence of the Christian multitude. I wish, therefore, to enforce it by quoting the words of Prof. C. A Briggs (in the *Presbyterian Review* for April, 1887, p. 340). "The critical analysis of the Hexateuch," says this Christian scholar, "is the result of more than a century of profound study of the documents by the greatest critics of the age. There has been a steady advance until the present position of agreement has been reached in which Jew and Chris-

tian, Roman Catholic and Protestant, Rationalistic and Evangelical scholars, Reformed and Lutheran, Presbyterian and Episcopal, Unitarian, Methodist and Baptist all concur. The analysis of the Hexateuch into several distinct original documents is a purely literary question in which no article of faith is involved. Whoever in these times, in the discussion of the literary phenomena of the Hexateuch, appeals to the ignorance and prejudices of the multitude as if there were any peril to the faith in these processes of the Higher Criticism risks his reputation for scholarship by so doing. There are no Hebrew professors on the continent of Europe, so far as I know, who would deny the literary analysis of the Pentateuch into the four great documents. The professors of Hebrew in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh, and tutors in a large number of theological colleges, hold to the same opinion. A very considerable number of the Hebrew professors of America are in accord with them. There are, indeed, a few professional scholars who hold to the traditional opinion, but these are in a hopeless minority. I doubt whether there is any question of scholarship whatever in which there is greater agreement among scholars than in this question of the literary analysis of the Hexateuch."

Prof. Briggs also correctly states the points on which the critics are in concord respecting the four great documents, as follows: The document of the Deuteronomist (D) may be easily distinguished, because it is chiefly in one solid mass. With the exception of a few passages, in which the editor has combined the priestly narrative with the prophetic story, the large work of the priestly narrator (A or the "Priests' Code") may also be readily distinguished. The separation in all cases of the theocratic

narrator (B) from the prophetic narrator (C) is more difficult; but as to the existence and principal characteristics of these documents there is a substantial agreement. The later editors of these four ancient inspired documents preserved the very words of the originals, as far as possible, and put them together into a whole, "at the expense of diffuseness, duplicate narratives, and even triplicates."

The two principal authorities who have recently published their mature conclusions, and who stand in the conservative ranks (that is, they are inclined to assign to an ancient and even a substantially Mosaic origin as much as possible of Pentateuchal legislation) are Dillmann and Delitzsch. The former of these may safely be called the prince of living Old-Testament scholars and commentators.

The conclusions of Dillmann's analysis of the Hexateuch are, in brief, as follows: The priests' narrative (A) was written in the kingdom of Judah in the ninth century B.C. The work of the theocratic narrator (B) was written in the northern kingdom in the first half of the same century; that of the prophetic narrator (C) in the southern kingdom not earlier than the middle of the eighth century. These three independent documents were compacted at one editing just before the Exile, and during the Exile were attached to Deuteronomy. There is one section of the Priests' Code which Dillmann calls the "Sinai Code." This includes the so-called "sanctity" legislation of Leviticus and other parts of the priestly legislation which share its peculiarities. It is later than the main body of A, although it contains many laws of great antiquity. These laws had been handed down in the circle of priests, and were codified not long before the Exile. Other short

codes of laws were collected during the Exile. These, all together with the Sinai Code, were incorporated with the four great documents called A, B, C, D, by an editor of the priestly circle among the exiles.

The view of Dillmann confirms what was said in the chapter on "the Authorship of the Biblical Books," where it was shown that while criticism can be trusted to have proved, beyond doubt, the composite nature of the Pentateuch, and therefore its non-Mosaic origin, it has not yet solved satisfactorily all the minor problems connected with the subject. It does not seem likely to us that we shall ever be able to reproduce in much detail the history of the one thousand years of legislative and literary activity which produced the present form of the first six books of the Old Testament.

The name of Prof. Delitzsch has for years been connected with the conception of a devout Christian scholarship used in the defence of the faith against attacks upon the supernatural character of the Old-Testament religion and of the writings which record its development. The first edition of his Commentary on Genesis was issued thirty-five years ago; the last has but recently appeared. Steadily has this Christian scholar been led by his researches, and love for truth, farther and farther away from the traditional view as to the origin of the Hexateuch. We give below a brief summary of his present position.

In the opinion of Prof. Delitzsch only the *basis* of the several codes (Ex. xx.–xxiii., Deuteronomy, and the Priests' Code) incorporated in the Pentateuch is Mosaic; the form in which these codes (at least, Deuteronomy and the Priests' Code) are presented in the Pentateuch is of an origin much later than the time of Moses. The Decalogue and the laws forming "The Book of the Covenant" are

the most ancient portions; they preserve the Mosaic type "in its relatively oldest and purest form." Of this type Deuteronomy is a development. The statement that Moses "wrote" the Deuteronomic law (Deut. xxxi. 9, 24) does not refer to the present book of Deuteronomy, but to the code of laws which underlies it. Thus the *substance* of the book is ancient, but it owes its present form to a writer of prophetical spirit, who lived in the time of Hezekiah. As we have pointed out in the chapter on this subject, the writer of Deuteronomy does not claim to be Moses, for he introduces Moses as speaking (i. 1–5; iv. 44–49), and incorporates into his speeches antiquarian notices of his own (ii. 10–12, 20–23, etc.).

The Priests' Code, which embodies the more distinctively ritualistic and ceremonial legislation, is the result of a long and progressive development. Certain of its *principles* originated with Moses, but its form, which is utterly unlike that of the other parts of the Pentateuch, was received at the hands of the priests of the nation. Probably some particular priest, at a much later date indeed than the time of Moses, but prior to the composition of Deuteronomy, was especially influential in shaping it. But the last stages of its development may belong to the period after the Exile.

The historical traditions which are incorporated into the Hexateuch were committed to writing at different times and by different hands. The narratives of them are superimposed, as it were, stratum upon stratum, in the Pentateuch and Book of Joshua. For the Book of Joshua is connected intimately with the Pentateuch, and when analyzed, shows the same composite structure. The differences which the several codes exhibit are due to modifications which they received in the course of history, as

they were variously collected, revised, and passed on from generation to generation.

One thing Prof. Delitzsch rightly insists upon as of supreme importance. "Torah and Pentateuch are not identical ideas. Only in late post-exilic times, after the three-fold division of the canon into law, prophets and hagiographa was established, did they come to be identified. . . . . If it be true that the Pentateuch *contains* the Torah, but *is not itself the Torah*, it is self-evident that the 'Book of the Law' which Moses, according to Deut. xxxi. 9, wrote, cannot be the Pentateuch, or even Deuteronomy in its present shape; and there is the less difficulty in holding that the Pentateuch, like all the other historical books of the Bible, is composed of documentary sources differing alike in character and age, which critical analysis may still be able, with greater or less certainty, to distinguish and separate from one another."

We do not know how better to close this brief presentation of the facts regarding the authorship of the books ascribed by tradition to Moses, as well as our whole attempt to answer the question, What is the Bible? than by reiterating our firm persuasion that *the faith of the Christian cannot suffer from a knowledge of the truth.* For, as says the venerable and pious scholar, Prof. Delitzsch: "God is a God of truth! The love of truth, submission to the yoke of truth, abandonment of traditional views which will not endure the test of truth, is a sacred duty, an element of the genuine fear of God. 'Will ye be God's partisans?' exclaims Job indignantly to his friends, who assume toward him the part of advocates for God, while they distort the facts on which the issue rests *in majorem Dei gloriam.*"

INDEX.

Abraham, traditions of, 202 f., 208 f.
Antilegomena, the, 379, 383 f.
Antioch, School of, 41 f.
Apocalypse, 384.
Apocrypha of the Old Testament, their views of Scripture, 20 f.; inspiration of, 33 f., 367 f., 375, 384; excluded from canon, 375, 384.
Augustine, his view of the Bible, 39 f.; canon of, 384, 385 f.

Balaam, two traditions of, 204 f.
Baxter, his views of the Bible, 60 f.
Bible, the, practical use of, 1 f., 10 f., 13 f., 74, 280 f.; criticism of, 6 f., 59, 105, 126, 329; Jewish views of, 17 f.; apocryphal witness to, 20 f.; Talmudic view of, 22 f.; view of the Church-Fathers concerning, 27 f.; infallibility of, 31 f., 50, 65 f., 135, 221 f., 227, 296, 448 f.; view of, in Middle Ages, 37 f.; Reformation view of, 47 f., 52; authority of, 52 f., 74, 434 f., 458 f.; dogmatic use of, 57, 465 f., 468 f., 472 f.; inspiration of, 75, 86 f., 96 f., 97, 101, 289, 330, 333 f., 361 f., 422 f., 432 f.; general claims of, 124; moral and religious teaching of, 257 f., 263 f., 268 f., 271 f., 282 f.; authorship of its books, 290 f., 294 f., 328 f.; as literature, 332 f., 337 f., 343 f., 358 f.; imagery of, 343 f.; lost books in, 371 f.; text of, 394 f.; manuscripts of, 397 f.; as record of revelation, 412, 417 f.; relations of, to the Church, 451 f., 454 f., 456 f.
Biblical Science, trustworthiness of, 12 f., 127 f.
Bundehesh, its early traditions, 197 f.

Calvin, views of, 48, 387.
Canon, the, how established, 18 f., 370, 373 f., 378 f.; meaning of the term, 363 f., 366 f., 369 f.; divided view of, 368, 376, 382; grounds of, 375 f., 383, 385 f., 390 f.; Roman Catholic view of, 387 f.
Chrysostom, views of, 42 f.
Church, inspiration of, 18 f

96 f., 364 f.; its early view of the Bible, 29 f., 34 f., 36; its doctrine of sacred Scripture summarized, 70 f.
CHURCH-FATHERS, their view of the Bible, 27 f.; of the Apocrypha, 33 f.
COSMOGONY, the Mosaic, 135 f., 139 f., 144 f., 150 f.
CRITICISM, the "higher," 59, 126; the "destructive," 105 f., 205; of the biblical histories, 189 f., 300; of the Pentateuch, 300 f.

DANIEL, BOOK OF, its language, 337 f.
DECALOGUE, origin of, 107.
DELUGE, the narrative of, 147 f., 193.
DEUTERONOMY, origin of, 108 f., 299 f., 304, 307, 310 f., 313, 314; discovery of, 314.
DODDRIDGE, his views of the Bible, 62.

EDEN, GARDEN OF, 197.
ESTHER, BOOK OF, morality of, 265 f., 374 f.; canonizing of, 374 f.

GENEALOGIES of Genesis, 198 f.; of the Evangelists, 223.
GENESIS, early chapters of, 127 f., 194, 196 f., 200 f.; cosmogony of, 137 f., 140 f.; composite structure of, 303.
GOSPELS, historical character of, 193 f., 212 f., 215 f., 321; as biographies of Jesus, 215 f., 321, 325 f.; discrepancies in, 221 f.; authorship of, 295, 320 f.; order of the origin of 322.
GREEK, the biblical, 333 f., 349 f., 360.

HAGIOGRAPHA, Talmudic view of, 23, 373; canonizing of, 373 f.
HEBREW as a language, 333 f., 338 f., 346 f., 360; origin of, 336 f.
HISTORIES, the Old-Testament, claims of, 123 f., 200 f.; of the biblical miracles, 166 f., 171 f., 177 f.; of the Bible in general, 185 f., 224 f.; discrepancies in, 188 f., 221 f., 306 f.; as revelation, 411 f.
HOKHMAH, the writings of the, 120 f.
HOLY SPIRIT, the, Biblical view of, 132 f.

INSPIRATION, earlier theory of, 8 f., 13; apocryphal view of, 21; Philo's theory of, 24 f.; of apocryphal writings, 33 f.; early Christian view of, 32 f.; *post*-Reformation theory of, 53 f., 65, 186 f.; Christ's view of, 80 f.; promised to the apostles, 86 f., 97; of the believing community, 96 f.; not special to biblical writers, 97 f.; verbal, 101, 435 f.; biblical view of, 112 f., 116 f., 176, 422 f.; subject of, 424, 426 f.; law of, 425; general nature of, 426 f., 428 f.; the biblical summarized, 432 f., 439 f.; not ecstasy, 434; not infallibility, 437 f.

Interpretation, the allegorical, 35 f., 38 f.; in the Middle Ages, 44 f.; Reformation view of, 51 f.; Christ's view of, 82 f.; history of, 129 f.; of prophecy, in the New Testament, 250 f.
Isaiah, the call of, 119; style of, 348.

Jashar, Book of, 182, 371.
Jerome, his translation of the Old Testament, 40 f.; view of the canon, 384 f.
Jesus Sirach, his view of the canon, 376.
John, Gospel of, its view of Old Testament, 93; picture of Jesus, 217 f.; authorship of, 292 f., 323, 325 f.; language of, 359.
Jonah, Christ's view of, 83 f.; history of, 205; morality of, 266.
Joseph, traditions of, 209.
Josephus, his view of the Bible, 25 f.; alleged testimony to Jesus, 214; view of the canon, 376 f.
Joshua, Book of, miracle in, 180 f.; authorship of, 309, 311.
Jude, Epistle of, its *extra*-biblical traditions, 91.
Judges, Book of, miracles in, 179; history of, 195 f., 203 f.
Justin Martyr, his view of inspiration, 32 f.

Law, the Mosaic, apocryphal view of, 20 f.; Talmudic view of, 22 f.; early heretical view of, 31 f.; Christ's view of, 79 f.; references to in the Old Testament, 104, 106 f., 109; the "Book of," 109, 302 f., 316, 371; morality of, 277 f., 281; ideal side of, 281 f., 309; development of, 303 f., 310 f., 319, 370 f.; codifying of, 371; canonizing of, 371, 373.
Luther, views of, 48, 49, 93, 385 f.

Miracles, objections to, 153 f., 170; conception of, 154 f., 159 f.; theological views of, 157 f.; titles of, 160 f.; of Christ, 161, 166 f., 173 f.; significance of the biblical, 162 f.; influence of, 163 f.; of the Old Testament, 170 f., 177 f., 180 f.; record of, 171 f., 175 f., 184.
Moses, personality of, 205 f.; books of, 297 f., 299.

New Testament, the inspiration of, 86 f., 99 f., 285 f.; histories of, 189 f., 212 f., 228 f.; moral and religious teaching of, 283 f.; progress of doctrine in, 287 f.; language of, 349 f., 353 f., 356 f.; manuscripts of, 352, 401 f.; canon of, 378 f., 381 f., 384 f., 388; text of, 400 f., 402 f., 404.

Old Testament, Christ's view of, 77 f.; New-Testament view of, 90 f., 94; Paul's view of 91 f.; its view of itself, 104 f. miracles of, 170 f., 177 f.; histories of, 189 f., 206 f.; moral

ity of, 264 f., 278 f., 280 f. 287; progress of doctrine in, 287; as theocratic literature, 334 f., 343; poetry of, 342 f., 345 f.; canonizing of, 375; manuscripts of, 397 f.; translations of, 399 f.

ORIGEN, view of the Bible, 30, 38.

PAUL, his view of Sacred Scripture, 91 f.; inspiration of, 100 f., 356 f.; teaching of, 284 f.; style of, 356, 359 f.

PENTATEUCH, Luther's view of, 49 f., 66 f.; the authorship of, 292, 296 f., 302 f., 306 f., 309 f., 312, 315 f.; laws of, 303 f., 371 f.; its composite character, 303 f., 305, 310; discrepancies in, 306 f.; canonization of, 372.

PHILO, his view of the Bible, 24 f., 32.

POST-REFORMATION Dogma of the Bible, 53 f., 186 f., 364, 388, 413 f.; distrust of, 57 f., 63 f.; fall of, 69 f.; its view of the text, 394 f.

PROPHECY, the fulfilment of, 78 f., 81, 233 f., 241, 242 f., 252 f.; growth of the Hebrew, 113 f., 237 f.; golden age of, 119 f.; nature of the biblical, 229 f., 247 f.; the Messianic, 229 f., 237 f., 245, 248 f.; conditional, 233 f., 252; dates of, 235; in the New Testament, 253 f.

PROPHETS, the Old-Testament, apocryphal view of, 21 f.; Talmudic view of, 22 f.; Christ's view of, 78 f.; claim of, 111 f.; inspiration of, 112 f., 116 f., 236 f., 243, 251; conception of, 114 f., 231 f.; consciousness of, 114 f., 232; writings of the, 118 f., 346 f., 372 f.; style of, 346 f.; canonization of, 372 f.

PROVERBS, BOOK OF, its morality, 266 f.

PSALMS, the claims of, 121 f., 373 f.; the prophetic, 122; the imprecatory, 275 f.; as literature, 341 f.; poetry of, 342 f., 345 f.; canonizing of, 373 f.

PSALTER, notice of, 122.

REVELATION, the biblical, nature of, 183 f., 406 f., 411 f.; continuous, 408; stages of, 410 f., 416 f.; purpose of, 414 f.

RUTH, BOOK OF, the morality of, 266.

SABBATH, institution of the Mosaic, 139 f., 150.

SAMSON, traditions of, 179.

SCIENCE of Nature, relation of, to the Bible, 59 f., 67, 126 f., 137 f., 150, 153 f.; among the Hebrews, 129, 130, 134 f., 138 f., 141 f., 151.

SENNACHERIB, annals of, 211 f.

SEPTUAGINT, Greek of, 350, 355 Hebraisms in, 354 f.

SONG OF SOLOMON, morality of, 267 f., 375; license of, 344 canonizing of, 374 f.

TALMUD, its view of the Bible 22 f.

TEXT, infallibility of the biblical, 8 f., 394 f.; in Jerome's time, 40 f.; modern view of, 58 f., 63 f.; preservation of, 396 f.; the Masoretic, 397 f.
THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA, views of, 42 f.
WORD OF GOD, the Reformation view of, 47 f., 52, 445; as distinguished from the Bible, 71 f., 420 f., 444 f., 452 f., 454 f.; Christocentric, 450 f.; relation of, to Christian consciousness, 452 f., 465 f.

BIBLICAL STUDY.

BIBLICAL STUDY. Its Principles, Methods, and History. By CHARLES A. BRIGGS, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and Cognate Languages in Union Theological Seminary. Crown 8vo, $2.50.

The author has aimed to present a guide to Biblical Study for the intelligent layman as well as the theological student and minister of the Gospel. At the same time a sketch of the entire history of each department of Biblical Study has been given, the stages of its development are traced, the normal is discriminated from the abnormal, and the whole is rooted in the methods of Christ and His Apostles.

THE BOSTON ADVERTISER.—"The principles, methods, and history of Biblical study are very fully considered, and it is one of the best works of its kind in the language, if not the only book wherein the modern methods of the study of the Bible are entered into, apart from direct theological teaching."

THE LONDON SPECTATOR.—"Dr. Briggs' book is one of much value, not the less to be esteemed because of the moderate compass into which its mass of information has been compressed."

MESSIANIC PROPHECY. The Prediction of the Fulfilment of Redemption through the Messiah. A Critical Study of the Messianic Passages of the Old Testament in the Order of their Development. By CHARLES A. BRIGGS, D.D., Professor of Hebrew and the Cognate Languages in the Union Theological Seminary. Crown 8vo, $2.50.

In this work the author develops and traces "the prediction of the fulfilment of redemption through the Messiah" through the whole series of Messianic passages and prophecies in the Old Testament. Beginning with the first vague intimations of the great central thought of redemption he arrays one prophecy after another ; indicating clearly the general condition, mental and spiritual, out of which each prophecy arises ; noting the gradual widening, deepening, and clarification of the prophecy as it is developed from one prophet to another to the end of the Old Testament canon.

THE LONDON ACADEMY.—"His new book on Messianic Prophecy is a worthy companion to his indispensable text-book on Biblical study. He has produced the first English text-book on the subject of Messianic Prophecy which a modern teacher can use."

THE EVANGELIST.—"Messianic Prophecy is a subject of no common interest, and this book is no ordinary book. It is, on the contrary, a work of the very first order ; the ripe product of years of study upon the highest themes. It is exegesis in a master-hand."

THE BEGINNINGS OF HISTORY. According to the Bible and the Traditions of the Oriental Peoples. From the Creation of Man to the Deluge. By FRANCOIS LENORMANT, Professor of Archæology at the National Library of France, etc. (Translated from the Second French Edition). With an introduction by Francis Brown, Associate Professor in Biblical Philology, Union Theological Seminary. 12mo, $2.50.

THE NEW ENGLANDER.—"Mr. Lenormant is not only a believer in revelation, but a devout confessor of what came by Moses; as well as of what came by Christ. In this explanation of Chaldean, Babylonian, Assyrian and Phenician tradition, he discloses a prodigality of thought and skill allied to great variety of pursuit, and diligent manipulation of what he has secured."

THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE.—"The work is one that deserves to be studied by all students of ancient history, and in particular by ministers of the Gospel, whose office requires them to interpret the Scriptures, and who ought not to be ignorant of the latest and most interesting contribution of science to the elucidation of the sacred volume."

QUOTATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. By C. H. TOY, D.D., Professor of Hebrew in Harvard University. 8vo, $3.50.

THE CONGREGATIONALIST.—"Textual points are considered carefully, and ample and accurate indexes complete the work. The minute and patient thoroughness of his examination of passages and the clear and compact arrangement of his views render his book remarkable. The difficulties of his task were great and he has shown rare skill and has attained noteworthy success in meeting them."

THE CHRISTIAN EVANGELIST.—"Prof. Toy's collection and comparison of the passages quoted in the New and Old Testament is a fine, scholarly piece of work. It surpasses anything that has been done by European scholarship in this field."

THE CHALDEAN ACCOUNT OF GENESIS. By GEORGE SMITH, of the Department of Oriental Antiquities, British Museum. A New Edition, revised and corrected (with additions), by A. H. Sayce. 8vo, $3.00.

THE N. Y. GUARDIAN.—"It is impossible in few words to give any adequate impression of the exceeding value of this work. This volume is sure to find its way into the public libraries of the country, and the important facts which it contains should be scattered everywhere among the people."

THE CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER.—"The accomplished Assyriologist Prof. Sayce has gone over the whole with the advantage of a large number of additional texts, and has carefully brought the book up to the level of the present knowledge of the subject. The book as it stands is a very important verification of the early Hebrew records."

MENTAL AND MORAL SCIENCE.

AN OUTLINE STUDY OF MAN; or, the Body and Mind in One System. With illustrative diagrams. Revised edition. By MARK HOPKINS, D.D., LL.D., late President of Williams College. 12mo, $1.75.

This is a model of the developing method as applied to intellectual science. The work is on an entirely new plan. It presents man in his unity, and his several faculties and their relations are so presented to the eye in illustrative diagrams as to be readily apprehended. The work has come into very general use in this country as a manual for instruction, and the demand for it is increasing every year.

GENERAL S. C. ARMSTRONG, *Principal of Hampton Institute.*—"I am glad of the opportunity to express my high appreciation of Dr. Hopkins' *Outline Study of Man.* It has done more for me personally than any book besides the Bible. More than any other it teaches the greatest of lessons, *know thyself.* For over ten years, I have made it a text book in the Senior Class of this school. It is, I think, the greatest and most useful of the books of the greatest of our American educators, Rev. Dr. Hopkins, and is destined to do a great work in forming not only the ideas but the character of youth in America and in other parts of the world."

PROF. ADDISON BALLARD, *of Lafayette College.*—"I have for years used Dr. Hopkins' *Outline Study of Man,* in connection with his *Law of Love,* as a text book for our Senior Classes. I have done this with unfailing success and with increasing satisfaction. It is of incalculable advantage to the student to come under the influence, through his books, of this great master of thought and of style. I cannot speak of *Outline Study* in terms of too hearty commendation."

THE LAW OF LOVE, AND LOVE AS A LAW; or, Christian Ethics. By MARK HOPKINS, D.D., LL.D., late President of Williams College. 12mo, $1.75.

This work is designed to follow the author's *Outline Study of Man.* As its title indicates it is entirely an exposition of the cardinal precept of Christian philosophy in harmony with nature and on the basis of reason. Like the treatise on mental philosophy it is adapted with unusual skill to educational uses.

It appears in a new edition, which has been in part re-written in order to bring it into closer relation to his *Outline Study of Man,* of which work it is really a continuation. More prominence has been given to the idea of Rights, but the fundamental doctrines of the treatise have not been changed.

PSYCHOLOGY. By JAMES McCOSH, D.D., LL.D., ex-President of Princeton College. I.—The Cognitive Powers. II.—The Motive Powers. 2 vols., 12mo. Sold separately. Each, $1.50.

The first volume contains an analysis of the operations of the senses, and of their relation to the intellectual processes, with a discussion of sense perception, from the physiological side, accompanied by appropriate cuts. The second volume treats of the Motive Powers, as they are called, the Orective, the Appetent, the Impulsive Powers; including the Conscience, Emotions, and Will.

PROF. WILLIAM DE W. HYDE, *of Bowdoin College.*—"The book is written in a clear and simple style; it breathes a sweet and winning spirit; and it is inspired by a noble purpose. In these respects it is a model of what a text book should be."

S. L. CALDWELL, *late President of Vassar College.*—"It is what was to have been expected from the ability and long experience of the author. The style is clear and simple; the matter is well distributed: it well covers the ground usually taught in such text books, and I am sure any teacher would find it a helpful guide in his classes."

FIRST AND FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS. Being a Treatise on Metaphysics. By JAMES McCOSH, D.D., LL.D., ex-President of Princeton College. 12mo, $2.00.

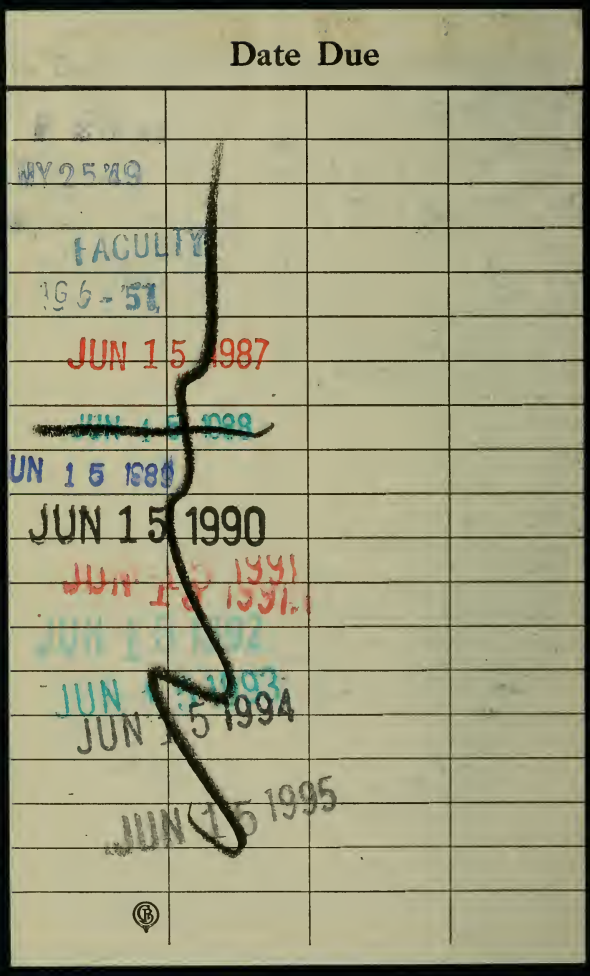
EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE.—"Every thinking mind has occasion at times to refer to first principles. In this work I have set myself earnestly to inquire what these are; to determine their nature, and to classify and arrange them into a science. In pursuing this end I have reached a Realistic Philosophy, opposed alike to the Sceptical Philosophy, which has proceeded from Hume, in England, and the Idealistic Philosophy, which has ramified from Kant, in Germany; while I have also departed from the Scottish and higher French Schools, as I hold resolutely that the mind, in its intelligent acts, begins with, and proceeds throughout on a cognition of things."

BOSTON TRAVELLER.—"The deep truth so ably presented by this grand metaphysician in this study of principles, and the satisfaction to be found in his system of realistic philosophy renders the work one of those valuable contributions to intellectual progress, whose advent is an important event in the progress of the human race."

ELEMENTS OF PHYSIOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY. By GEORGE T. LADD, D.D., Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy in Yale University. With numerous illustrations. 8vo, $4.50.

PROF. WILLIAM JAMES, in *The Nation.*—"His erudition and his broad-mindedness are on a par with each other; and his volume will probably for many years to come be the standard work of reference on the subject."

THE SCHOOL JOURNAL.—"It is impossible in a brief notice to give any adequate conception of the scientific character and practical application of this admirable volume. In its class it stands alone among American books. No thorough student of psychology will rest satisfied until he owns a copy of this work."



Date Due

MY 25 '49

FACULTY

1966-'51

JUN 15 1987

~~JUN 15 1988~~

UN 15 1989

JUN 15 1990

JUN 15 1991

JUN 15 1991

JUN 15 1992

JUN 15 1993

JUN 15 1994

JUN 15 1995

BS511 .L15
What is the Bible? : an inquiry into the
Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 00046 5841